Chapter 601 - 601 Strange Patient

601 Strange Patient

Late at night, amidst another round of cheers for a magic trick, Lumian downed the candied wine in his hand and exited the bar with a smirk.

He could already picture Aurore—if she were around—scoffing, “You’re so lame. You’re actually using the Governor of the Sea’s authority and power to pull off a magic trick. Deceiving those drunkards with the real thing. Is this your prank? You’re sure having a blast.”

Lumian responded silently, Being able to utilize superpowers and the Governor of the Sea’s authority for such matters, rather than in battle, should be what you desire, right? Isn’t this the joy and future you yearned for?

In the corridor, illuminated by kerosene wall lamps, Lumian stepped on the creaking floor, making his way back to the first-class suite in the silent, empty surroundings.

Snores and moans occasionally penetrated the walls on both sides. Near the stairs, a room stood open, reflecting the dim yellow light of the fire.

As Lumian passed by, he turned his head and observed the Sacred Emblem of Life, representing Earth Mother, engraved on the wall deep in the room. It portrayed a simple infant amidst wheat ears, flowers, spring water, and other symbols.

In front of the Sacred Emblem of Life stood a man in a brown clergyman’s robe. He was less than 30 years old, with clean eyebrows and a light brown beard. Holding a thick book, he preached to the men and women seated in different parts of the room.

Lumian knew this was a prayer room, akin to a small, mobile cathedral with a dedicated clergyman in charge. Common in countries that believed in only one deity, be it on long-distance ships or steam locomotives, they considered the need for believers to quietly pray and listen to teachings.

Lumian, who could already understand Highlander, memorized the words, “Life’s precious embrace, the harvest’s grace.” Retracting his gaze, he entered the corridor, ascending the stairs step by step.

Simultaneously, Lugano, having just finished attending to Ludwig’s supper, heard a knock on the door.

“Who is it?” Lugano was surprised and intrigued.

This couldn’t be his employer. He possessed the key and would simply open the door.

Moreover, it was nearly 11 p.m. Who would visit at such an hour?

Could it be that a woman overheard my boasting on the deck, believed me, and came to share a pleasant night?

As Lugano started to indulge in fantasies, he heard a feeble male voice.

“I’m here to see Dr. Lugano.”

Seeking a doctor… Lugano couldn’t help but frown, but he still opened the door.

Outside stood a man wrapped in a thick tweed coat, a stark contrast to Lugano’s linen shirt and thin pants.

Lugano scrutinized the visitor.

“I’m Lugano. What’s the matter?”

The man’s face was pale, his eyes dark, revealing little vitality. Though young, in his early twenties, he exuded a lifeless aura.

The man took a deep breath and weakly said, “You can call me Enio. I heard that you helped several people on the deck discover the true cause of their illness and quickly improved their condition. I want you to treat me.

“I have the money to pay for the consultation.”

Observing the fellow’s sickly appearance, Lugano sighed and replied, “Come in. Keep your voice down. As you know, I’m the private doctor of a prominent figure. He doesn’t appreciate strangers disturbing him.”

Once Enio settled on the sofa, Lugano, out of habit, inquired about his condition to conceal his subsequent mystical diagnosis.

“What’s wrong with your body?”

Enio paused for a moment before saying, “Since half a month ago, I’ve become sensitive to the cold and weak. No appetite. Runny nose, repeated coughing, and my condition is worsening.”

“Mm…” Lugano nodded, raising his right hand and tapping his forehead, as if contemplating the significance of the patient’s narrative.

In reality, he seized the opportunity to activate his Spirit Vision, preparing to discern the other party’s illness from the color, brightness, and thickness of his

Ether Body.

With a swift glance, Lugano nearly jumped out of his skin.

Is the patient sitting in front of me still alive?

In Lugano's eyes, the once white glow shrouding Enio's Ether Body, signifying overall balance, had turned a somber grayish-black. It was a dire indication of his severe illness, teetering on the edge of death.

Yet, it wasn't this revelation that left Lugano shocked and bewildered. What truly sent shivers down his spine was: the orange glow, symbolizing the health of excretion, detoxification, and other vital organs, had dimmed into complete darkness. No vestige of brightness remained, signaling the complete cessation of their functions!

Likewise, the yellow hue representing the digestive system, the green indicating the heart and regulatory system, and the blue denoting the throat and part of the nervous system had all dulled and lost their radiance.

Enio's remaining hues were red on his limbs and purple on the surface of his head.

W-what does this "diagnosis" imply?

This meant that Enio was a person with a silent heart, a dormant stomach, and internal organs that had relinquished their functions. Yet, he could still think, move, and speak!

Son of a bitch, where did this monstrosity come from! Lugano, facing such an unprecedented "patient," inwardly cursed, his frame trembling slightly.

He dreaded the moment when the other might unexpectedly utter, "Doctor, I'm cold. Let me borrow your skin. Doctor, I'm hungry. Let me borrow your stomach and intestines…"

Noticing Lugano's silence, Enio anxiously inquired, "Doctor, what illness am I suffering from?"

Illness? Lugano muttered to himself urgently, Snap out of it! Your heart has ceased beating; the absence of flowing blood naturally brings about a chilling sensation!

Those with non-agitating stomachs certainly won't have much of an appetite!

As these thoughts raced through his mind, Lugano pondered for a moment and declared,

"Your condition is grave. I require further analysis and observation to draw conclusions. Can you visit me tomorrow morning?

"Before that, I need to draw some of your blood for research."

“No problem.” Despite Enio’s lack of confidence in Lugano, he extended his right hand with the mindset that attempting something was better than nothing.

Armed with the necessary tools, Lugano extracted some blood from Enio’s body using a needle, rubber hose, and a glass blood collection bottle. Despite their darkened hue, he noted a basic vitality still present. Subsequently, he listened to Enio’s heartbeat and detected faint, but existing, beats.

Curious… Lugano seized the opportunity of the consultation and prescription to subtly cast a faint light upon his palm, providing Enio with a simple treatment.

Enio’s spirits lifted, and a semblance of strength returned.

“Thank you, Doctor. Your massage and medicine are effective. I appreciate it!” Enio left the suite with a cheerful expression.

None of the previous doctors he had consulted had made the slightest improvement in his condition. This time, he intended to set sail to the south, take a steam locomotive to the Church of Earth Mother’s headquarters for treatment.

Baffled, Lugano observed as Enio left. Soon after, his employer returned.

He quickly recounted the encounter to Lumian, concluding with, “I’ve secured his blood. Can you find someone to divine the truth?”

“Divination?” Lumian chuckled as he received the blood-filled bottle and knocked on Ludwig’s child’s room.

“Take a sip and see what knowledge you can glean.” Lumian handed the bottle to Ludwig, ensuring no avenue of exploitation slipped by.

Ludwig’s expression remained stoic, as if sipping bedtime milk. He drank down the liquid in the bottle without flinching.

Lugano was bewildered, his eyes reflecting surprise and confusion.

After tasting the blood, Ludwig spoke at an adequate pace, “Absent stomach, absent small and large intestine, absent lungs, absent liver and pancreas…

“It’s akin to a deceased person relying on mystic forces to persist…

“He won’t last a week…”

Wh… Lugano was taken aback that Ludwig not only imbibed human blood but also made somber judgments with a straight face. He was also shocked to learn that Enio truly lacked those organs.

Initially, he believed it was just a loss of corresponding function.

According to Ludwig, wasn’t Enio essentially a dead man?

What had he stumbled upon?

“What should we do?” Lugano turned to Lumian.

Lumian couldn’t help but chuckle softly.

“What can we do? Locate the captain, the ship’s security supervisor, or the priest in the prayer room, and report this matter. They’ll handle it.”

Lugano nodded and tentatively asked, “But won’t this expose me as a Beyonder?”

“Tell them you’re Louis Berry’s servant,” Lumian advised calmly.

“Alright.” Lugano was fine with being a servant. After a moment’s thought, he asked in puzzlement, “Did you hear any strange sounds at night? I occasionally hear a baby crying.”

“Baby?” Lumian asked, shaking his head. “I didn’t hear it.”

Lugano pondered aloud, “Is there a baby crying on this floor?”

Then, he looked at Lumian.

“Shall I go find the captain now?”

Lumian’s eyes flickered as he smiled and said, “Tomorrow morning.”

“Alright,” Lugano agreed without hesitation.

He preferred waiting for dawn and sunlight before addressing such a peculiar issue. Reporting it at night made him sense an impending, unexpected event.

The sun provided a reassuring sense of security!

Lumian didn’t question or provide further advice. He entered his room, freshened up, and went to bed.

However, sleep eluded him. Instead, he half-closed his eyes, anticipating something.

After an indeterminate period, Lumian heard a faint creak.

The door to one of the rooms opened softly.

Lumian swiftly sat up, silently approaching the door, cracking it open.

He saw a figure leisurely walk out of Lugano’s servant’s room.

It was Lugano, clad in a linen shirt. His eyes were open but oddly vacant and unfocused, his face devoid of expression.

As if sleepwalking, Lugano made his way to the suite’s door.

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Chapter 602 - 602 “Surgery”

602 “Surgery”

Lugano’s eyes remained open as he swung open the door to the suite, his gaze vacant. He stepped into the deserted corridor, where only the sound of crashing waves reverberated.

In this moment, everyone, save for the sailor on night duty, succumbed to slumber.

Lugano moved forward, the kerosene wall lamps around him casting an ethereal glow that mingled with the encroaching darkness.

He reached the end of the floor and halted in front of a vivid vermilion wooden door.

Creak. The door groaned open, and the darkness within seemed to swallow every trace of light.

Lugano traversed the obscurity with a blank expression, entering the room. Behind him, the vermilion door was pulled shut by an imperceptible force.

It was a suite. The living and dining areas lay shrouded in darkness, devoid of any candlelit glow. The faint crimson moonlight filtered through the curtains, offering minimal visibility.

At the dining table stood two shadowy figures. One of them appeared aged, with mostly gray hair and dark, deep blue eyes that seemed to absorb the night.

Despite the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, the elder’s skin remained well-maintained, adorned in a loose, dark-black robe.

Beside him stood Enio, the brown-haired, brown-eyed patient who had intruded upon Lugano that night, his pale face devoid of life. His vacant gaze fixated on the unadorned table.

Lugano, as if sleepwalking, stood next to Enio, unusually quiet.

The elder in the loose black robe turned his head, fixing his gaze on Enio.

The patient ambled towards the dining table, climbed on it, and lay completely motionless.

The blond elder brandished a sharp scalpel, unfastening Enio’s tweed coat, cashmere sweater, and cotton shirt. He pressed the razor-sharp blade against

Enio's chest, producing a ripping sound as he sliced through layers of flesh, creating a long wound.

As Enio's chest and abdominal cavity lay exposed to the crimson moonlight, a void greeted the eye.

No stomach, no lungs, no small or large intestines, liver, or kidneys. Only a weakly beating bright red heart, accompanied by a few blood vessels extending from it.

With a swift motion, the old man in the dark-black robe manipulated the scalpel, his other hand flickering with a faint light as he pressed down.

In a sequence too rapid for the eye to follow, he withdrew the still-beating heart in his left hand.

Enio's chest and abdomen, now empty, displayed only a few non-bleeding blood vessels.

The old man closed the incision with a tight squeeze, sealing it with a flickering light.

Enio's stomach returned to its original state, devoid of any scars.

Throughout this extraordinary procedure, the special patient's eyes remained open, as if untouched by the surgical ordeal.

In that moment, he rolled off the dining table, ambled to the door, and exited the room.

The old man opened his suitcase, revealing glass jars containing pale amber liquid, each cradling various organs: spleen, lungs, liver, kidneys, stomach, and intestines…

Placing these items on the dining table in a peculiar order, surrounding the still gently beating scarlet heart, the old man in the loose black robe took a step back. He recited an ancient, malevolent, yet strangely intimate language.

As the unknown murmur resonated, the internal organs ascended slowly, upheld by an invisible force.

Their final positions varied, resembling the internal organs of a standing human.

The heart, liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys emitted a faint glow simultaneously, outlining a form on the dining table. It lacked a head, limbs, or bones, merely a corporeal essence that grew more defined.

A baby's cry echoed, faint yet tangible.

However, the body distorted, squirmed, and disintegrated in the end.

The old man in the loose black robe sighed with regret.

Strangely, the wrinkles at the corners of his eyes were noticeably reduced, and much of his white hair had reverted to light gold.

In an instant, he appeared seven or eight years younger.

Sensing his good condition, the elder turned his attention to Lugano.

Lugano, seemingly summoned, approached the dining table and lay down, awaiting with open eyes.

The elder unbuttoned Lugano's linen shirt, took up the scalpel, and gestured as if deciding where to make the incision.

Suddenly, a loud bang reverberated.

The vermilion door swung open, crashing into the wall.

Crimson flames surged, illuminating the room, climbing the walls and ceiling, transforming the place into a fiery inferno.

Lumian, adorned in black hair, green eyes, a golden straw hat, a cotton shirt, a black vest, and dark pants, materialized at the door and entered the suite.

He calmly addressed the old man in the loose black robe, "Don't you know he's my servant?"

The elder's eyes narrowed as he readied the scalpel to descend towards Lugano's neck.

However, his right hand refused to budge, seemingly restrained by an invisible force pushing it upward.

In the midst of the rising crimson flames, Lumian paused, displaying no urgency to act. He spoke with intrigue,

"That surgery was quite fascinating—extracting internal organs while leaving the person alive, albeit gradually dying.

"And you used those organs for a ritual, rejuvenating yourself. Meanwhile, you nearly brought forth a peculiar lifeform."

Surprise flickered in the elder's dark-blue eyes.

"How do you know?"

Haven't you just arrived in pursuit of your servant?

And no one entered before you!

Lumian emitted a soft chuckle.

“You don’t need to know.”

I still have a few hours of Governor of the Sea authority. Isn’t it easy to ‘see’ something in these waters?

Sensing Lumian’s confidence, certainty, ease, and absence of hostility, the elder fell silent briefly before expressing, “Life is the most precious, so life becomes the finest sacrifice and ingredient.”

He refrained from divulging details about the surgery or ritual, choosing instead to expound on his philosophy and the truth he sought.

Praising and blaspheming life simultaneously? Lumian arched his eyebrows, finding it vaguely reminiscent of Lady Moon, Madame Night, and the bestowed of the Great Mother.

Carefully assessing the black-robed elder behind the dining table, Lumian, upon confirming his gender, temporarily set aside his sudden anxiety.

Gazing down at the motionless Lugano on the dining table, Lumian casually inquired, “How did you control my servant?”

The elder fixed Lumian with a penetrating gaze, as if probing the depths of his intentions. He pondered, weighing the decision to preach the truth or engage in a confrontation to eradicate the issue.

After a brief silence, he spoke in a resonant voice,

“He’s a Blessed of the Great Mother. He heard the cries of the Son of God.”

Great Mother? Lumian’s scalp tingled at the term.

Had it not been for the Sea Governor’s authority, Lumian would have launched a full-scale attack without allowing the elder a moment to react or explain.

Regardless, even if he eliminated the elder, spirit channeling remained a viable option. Moreover, the elder could be fed to Ludwig!

Though taken aback by the elder’s possible reference to Lugano as a Blessed of Earth Mother, Lumian swiftly dismissed the apparent meaning.

He was certain that Lugano was human and harbored no unusual bloodlines.

Following Lugano’s injury at Solow Motel, Jenna collected his splattered blood and conducted Magic Mirror Divination according to Lumian’s subsequent instructions.

In an instant, Lumian deciphered the elder’s true meaning.

The Beyonders of the Planter pathway are all Blessed of the Great Mother?

Where does Earth Mother stand? Planter is the main pathway of the Church of Earth Mother…

Could it be… the Great Mother reigns over multiple pathways, akin to the Celestial Worthy and Mr. Fool? Planter and Sower? The names bear a striking connection…

As Lumian's thoughts raced, his focus intensified on the existence of the Son of God. Cordu's empty infant cradle and the honorific title of Lady Moon nurturing a deity flooded his mind.

Dammit, why is it that the Great Mother seems entwined with children, Sons of God, and babies? Does that entity have a penchant for offspring? Lumian smirked superficially.

"It seems your Son of God hasn't truly been born."

The old man in the loose black robe suddenly became fervent.

"He's already born in the spirit world, but He's yet to step into the real world.

"Don't you see? Just revealing His form made me a few years younger. If He were truly born, I'd instantly regain my youth!"

Who knows what malevolent creation you've unleashed… Lumian criticized and said, "You plan to shape the Son of God's body with just this fragment of life?"

The elder was taken aback.

"This is a ritual bestowed by the Great Mother's revelation. It's undeniably effective!"

Lumian smiled.

"That Enio is unmistakably an ordinary person. The ritual's effects won't bode well. If it were a Beyonder with a robust life force, the outcome might be entirely different."

The elder instinctively concurred, "Indeed. That's why I intended to examine your servant's internal organs…"

At this juncture, the elder halted, casting a wary glance at Lumian.

With a beaming smile, Lumian proposed, "Have you ever thought of sacrificing your own internal organs?

"If you don't offer yourself as a sacrifice, how can you showcase your devotion to the Great Mother and your reverence for the Son of God?

“Don’t fret; the Son of God will revive you and bestow youth upon you!”

As he concluded his words, a dark-green light condensed in Lumian’s right hand.

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Chapter 603 - 603 Organs Again

603 Organs Again

The dark-green light morphed into a beam, slamming into the old man's chest and sinking into the loose black robe, akin to sunlight, unstoppable.

Already appearing seven to eight years younger, the old man's expression twisted, and every inch of exposed skin displayed signs of melting.

His aura rapidly waned.

Simultaneously, a burst of vigorous life force erupted from his body. Under the melting skin, flesh and blood writhed, resisting the mutation.

The black-robed old man's eyes darkened, and he abruptly faded away.

In an instant, a hazy face emerged from the armchair at the dining table, blending with the brown wood, about to gain clarity.

At that moment, a cascade of flames descended from the crimson-flame-covered ceiling, soaking the armchair and swiftly setting it ablaze.

Before the brown face could fully materialize, it succumbed to the raging flames, forced to retreat.

Lumian lost sight and sense of the black-robed elder subsequently.

While surveying the surroundings, Lugano, lying on the dining table, suddenly sat up and jumped down. He stared at Lumian with vacant eyes, like a wandering zombie.

Lumian chuckled, raising his right hand and pointing at Lugano.

With this gesture, specks of brilliance shimmered in his eyes, as if the cosmos had descended.

Lugano found himself in an empty night sky, surrounded by twinkling stars.

He stood rooted to the ground in a daze. Without any subsequent actions, he resembled a machine that had lost its energy and controller.

Having settled his servant, Lumian surveyed his surroundings once more.

Yet, his eyes brimmed with flowing and burning crimson flames, and the black-robed elder's figure remained elusive.

Lumian's expression remained stoic as he splayed the five fingers on his right hand, clenching them into a fist.

His body suddenly grew heavy, and the flames surrounding him surged towards him like a river converging into the sea, drawn by an invisible force.

Bottles, organs from various body parts, and lightweight items in the room soared towards Lumian.

On the wooden coat rack near the door, the transparent figure of the black-robed elder protruded, pulled away by an unseen force.

He fought with all his might, but he couldn't resist the pull towards Lumian. It was akin to a piece of wood caught in a flood or a thin leaf fluttering in a fierce wind.

Lumian's left hand was already raised, and the crimson, nearly white flame in his palm rapidly turned white under the intense suction force, forming a minuscule ball.

Layers of compressed white-hot fireballs were unleashed, and the weighty and fearsome suction force dissipated.

Pa! The black-robed elder finally landed on the floor, his vision completely engulfed by the blazing white fireball.

Rumble!

The blazing white fireball collided with the Beyonder conducting the sinister surgery and strange ritual. The explosion's sound echoed into the distance but was muffled by the darkness shrouding the room, preventing it from permeating.

In the midst of such a violent explosion, no one on the ship heard or sensed anything awry.

Rumble!

The black-robed elder's body was shredded by the devastating explosion. Countless corpse fragments were instantly charred or consumed by bright flames, scattering across every corner of the living room and dining room.

With spirit channeling at his disposal and Ludwig providing support, Lumian reveled in the authority of the Governor of the Sea and the nearly demigod-level power it bestowed. He cared not for what the enemy might transform into.

Incredible. Is this what it's like to be a demigod? Even if it's just an illusion… Sadly, it won't last beyond six in the morning… Lumian sighed, directing his gaze at the burning corpse fragments.

A quick inspection revealed that the black-robed elder's flesh had rapidly charred or turned to ashes. It was as if frost had met magma from a volcanic eruption.

In a matter of seconds, only the heart, liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys, intestines, and stomach remained in the room, along with a grayish-white half-charred brain.

Wh… Even with his feet, Lumian could tell that something was awry.

Except for the brain, the remnants of the enemy were all internal organs.

The malevolent surgery he had just completed involved extracting someone's internal organs to let them live as if nothing happened!

At the same time, the peculiar ritual he performed utilized the complete set of internal organs to attempt to reconstruct the so-called Child of God's body!

All internal organs—it was hard for Lumian not to draw a connection.

Could it be that this fellow's internal organs were extracted before, and he survived by piecing together others' internal organs, becoming a Beyonder? What's this called? Human alchemy? If it's true, who took his internal organs? Lumian pondered silently.

The stars in his eyes swiftly dissipated, and Lugano returned to the real world.

From a distance of four to five meters, Lumian raised his right hand and smoothly swung it.

Smack!

Lugano felt the impact of an invisible force against his face.

With a sudden jolt, his eyes gradually cleared of their blank stare.

The first sight that greeted Lugano was the crimson flames falling around him, extinguishing before causing any havoc.

Then, he noticed charred body parts, scattered internal organs, glass jars filled with light-amber liquid, and organs soaked in them.

Am I still dreaming? Is this a nightmare? Just as this thought crossed Lugano's mind, the image of his employer, Louis Berry, with black hair and green eyes, appeared before him.

Son of a bitch, this dream took an unexpected turn! Lugano shuddered and involuntarily inquired, "What happened?"

Lumian pondered for a moment and asked, "What dream did you just experience?"

What dream? Lugano confirmed his wakefulness and recollected, “I dreamed of my childhood. My mother stood at the door, urging me to come home for dinner. She even sang a nursery rhyme from my hometown…

“She’s been gone for almost ten years. I miss her dearly. I kept walking towards the door, but I couldn’t reach her…”

At that moment, Lugano realized that this wasn’t their suite. He exclaimed in shock,

“What happened?”

With a smile, Lumian responded, “You slept until midnight and suddenly sleepwalked all the way here. An old man had plans to operate on you, remove your kidneys, and slowly turn you into a patient like Enio.”

The more Lugano listened, the more fear gripped him. Earlier, he had wondered how someone like Enio, who had lost most of his internal organs, could still be alive, albeit turning weak—only to realize that he was so close to turning into a similar figure!

“Hiss…” Lugano gasped and asked with trepidation, “Where’s that old man?”

“That’s all that remains.” Lumian gestured at the internal organs and the grayish-white, half-charred brain on the ground.

Without giving Lugano a chance to sigh, Lumian instructed, “Bring Ludwig here.”

It was also almost time for his midnight snack.

Lugano hastily left the suite, grateful for choosing to follow Lumian to the Southern Continent.

Otherwise, he would be at the mercy of such situations elsewhere!

Lugano believed this matter had nothing to do with Lumian. He had brought it upon himself. If it were Trier, he might have encountered a similar patient who had lost internal organs.

Lumian watched him leave, raised his right hand, and stroked his chin.

Simply hearing the infant’s cries from the failed ritual can influence Beyonders of the Planter pathway to sleep and act in a sleepwalking state, receiving corresponding orders?

Isn’t this too exaggerated? It’s an absolute suppression on the Planter pathway…

I could understand a similar phenomenon if that ritual had succeeded, and the Child of God was truly born. Yet, it’s already this powerful despite being a failed product?

Even with the limitation of its range, it's still terrifying… Is there a key reason I don't know?

Moreover, can only Beyonders of the Planter or Sower pathways hear the Child of God's cries? Can the Apothecary pathway, which can interchange with the Planter pathway, also hear it?

Amidst Lumian's thoughts, Lugano led Ludwig into the suite.

Faced with this gruesome scene, Ludwig pressed his hand to his mouth and yawned.

"Where's the food?"

Lumian didn't make any immediate requests. Instead, he turned to Lugano.

"Guard the door."

With the prior experience of the blood-drinking incident, Lugano could vaguely guess what was about to happen. He didn't dare face it directly. Upon hearing Lumian's instructions, he heaved a sigh of relief and jogged to the corridor, closing the vermilion door behind him.

Only then did Lumian gesture towards the scattered internal organs on the ground.

"Do you need me to roast it for you?"

Ludwig shot a quick glance at Lumian.

"Don't you find it irksome? These are all human organs."

Lumian emitted a soft chuckle.

"In my eyes, this is already on par with a monster's insides."

He then wore a self-deprecating expression.

"Moreover, isn't directly consuming Beyonder characteristics to advance a Beyonder equivalent to eating someone?"

Ludwig remained silent, taking a few steps to the side. He squatted down, picked up the old man's heart, stuffed it into his mouth, and began to chew.

Crimson blood slowly trickled from the corner of his mouth.

Lumian pulled up a chair and sat down, patiently waiting for Ludwig to finish his meal and digest.

After seven to eight minutes, Ludwig retrieved a white handkerchief from his coat pocket and wiped his mouth.

“These internal organs belong to different people. Some are Beyonders, some are ordinary folks, some old, some teenagers…

“There are traces of human refinement. The aura of life is rather mixed and impure…

“They will be controlled and influenced by the refiner…

“Having been refined, the person doesn’t know that he’s been through this.

“He has complete memories of the past. This is something that can’t be achieved by refining an ordinary body.

“He followed Enio on board, hoping to extract the remaining organs and complete the ritual before Enio reached his destination…”

Ludwig recounted the knowledge and memories he had absorbed in a straightforward tone.

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Chapter 604 - 604 School of God's Descent

604 School of God's Descent

Under the glow of the crimson moon, Ludwig, clad in a two-piece pajama set and a small coat, recounted the memories and knowledge he had absorbed from the black-robed elder's half-charred brain and internal organs. He did so methodically, like an emotionless time-reporting machine.

"Only the brain belongs to him. His name is Prinpino.

"Due to his advanced age and weakened body, he delved into mysticism. Unwittingly, he drew the attention of the Great Mother and acquired a wealth of secret knowledge, evolving into a Beyonder…"

Upon hearing this, Lumian muttered with a mix of mockery and fear, Despite gaining the Great Mother's attention, did he not turn pregnant?

Are you truly a follower of the Great Mother?

Ludwig continued, "I'm uncertain when Prinpino started losing his internal organs. I failed to absorb the pertinent knowledge and memories.

"Similarly, the time he became a human refinement product remains unknown.

"His philosophy is:

"Humanity, once the favored and proudest children of the Great Mother, fell into folly, aging, and weakness due to their detachment from her.

"Only by allowing the divine son of the Great Mother to descend into the world can humanity be saved. They can enter Paramita and regain their original form.

"When the time arrives, the Great Mother will return to the real world she governs."

Using the gender-oriented pronoun "she" to refer to the Great Mother instead of "She"… This implies that, in the eyes of individuals like Prinpino, pregnancy and childbirth are still feminine matters. A mother must be a "she"… This differs from the Nightstalkers… Lumian glanced at Ludwig and nodded approvingly.

Ludwig calmly detailed Prinpino's attempts and some of his abilities.

“The birth of the Child of God requires a specific body composed of various people’s internal organs…

“This isn’t the entire descent ritual. It lacks a crucial component…

“Prinpino possesses potent self-healing abilities. As a product of human refinement, he’s immune to the influence of many Beyonder powers.

“He can indirectly control humans corrupted by the Child of God or specific Pathway Beyonders who have had direct contact with special patients. The range is 100 meters, and they must be unconscious…”

Upon hearing this, Lumian suddenly recalled a Sequence 7 Vampire of the Apothecary pathway.

Such Beyonders wielded formidable self-healing abilities and could craft Blood Slaves resembling their own marionettes!

Lumian refrained from interrupting Ludwig, patiently awaiting further details.

“He’s adept in surgery and can directly heal others. He knows a ritual enabling a human to survive for a period even without internal organs.

“He can merge with trees and wooden articles for concealment, acquire a sturdy shell, and evade detection.

“He can stimulate the growth and reproduction of creatures, including but not limited to rats, fleas, bedbugs, fungi, and various plants. However, it drains his vitality. His vitality can be replenished through an unsuccessful Child of God descent ritual. Every nine rituals necessitate a batch of internal organs to be replaced…

“He can also inflict curses upon others, summon malevolent creatures, consume his life for the casting of a few nefarious arts…”

As Ludwig concluded, Lumian realized Prinpino’s Beyonder powers were diverse. He possessed partial Vampire abilities and embodied certain traits of the Earth pathway’s Planter, Doctor, and other Sequences. Simultaneously, he wielded a limited grasp of dark arts, expending vitality for their execution.

It’s akin to the amalgamation of the Apothecary, Planter, and Heretic Spellmaster pathways, yet it’s not exhaustive… Such a boon exists? The Great Mother truly reigns at the apex of these three pathways… Lumian reflected momentarily before taking Ludwig’s hand and departing the suite.

He instructed Lugano, stationed at the door, “Summon the priest from the prayer room and inform him of all pertinent details you are aware of.”

After issuing his directive, Lumian deliberated before appending, “Locate the captain first, then seek out the priest.”

“Alright,” Lugano assented reflexively before inquiring, “And yourself?”

“Of course I’m going back to bed. Should they seek an audience with me, they may wait until tomorrow morning.” Lumian gestured dismissively, guiding Ludwig along the dimly illuminated corridor to his suite.

Am I solely accountable? Lugano mused to himself.

He suddenly noticed he stood alone at the suite’s threshold, surrounded by scattered internal organs. A shiver traversed his spine, prompting him to hasten toward the captain’s quarters.

…

Ten minutes later, inside the black-robed old man’s suite.

The priest named Montserrat and the captain, Pedro, scrutinized the situation while listening to Lugano’s detailed account.

Nervously, Lugano disclosed to them that he was a Beyonder, a Doctor of the Planter pathway. Enio sought him out due to his exceptional skills in treating patients. Later, during the late night, he experienced a sleepwalking episode. When he reached the suite, he found his internal organs almost removed. Fortunately, he was rescued by his employer.

Throughout the entire narrative, Lugano only omitted Ludwig’s consumption of blood, sharing everything else he knew.

Pedro, the captain with the handsome brown beard, quipped half-seriously,

“Could it be that your employer killed a passenger in this suite and deliberately scattered his internal organs everywhere, concocting such a sinister Warlock tale to deceive us?”

Uh… Lugano found himself momentarily speechless.

Indeed, this possibility couldn’t be entirely dismissed!

Father Montserrat, garbed in a brown clergyman’s attire, shook his head.

“After confirming Enio’s physical condition, we’ll determine the veracity of this story.”

“I concur.” Captain Pedro stroked his beard and gazed at Lugano. “What’s your employer’s name?”

“Louis Berry,” Lugano truthfully replied.

“Louis Berry…” Pedro’s eyes narrowed. “The adventurer who hunted down the Demon Warlock, Louis Berry?”

Montserrat's eyes widened slightly.

"The one collaborating with the Church in Port Santa to covertly thwart malevolent forces disrupting the sea prayer ritual, Adventurer Louis Berry?"

Wh… My boss' reputation is so renowned? Did the Church of Earth Mother inform all the clergy that Louis Berry is a friend and collaborator? Yes, this ship departed from Port Santa. The priest on board must have been the first to be informed… Lugano had considered it, but he hadn't expected his employer's name to be so impactful.

Without hesitation, he affirmed, "It's him, Adventurer Louis Berry."

Just as Lugano concluded his account, the entire ship was abruptly sent airborne, landing atop a wave dozens of meters tall.

No dark clouds or torrential rain accompanied the phenomenon, and there were no violent winds or lightning.

After vaulting between the pitch-black waves several times, the steamship gently descended onto the sea's surface, restoring calm to its surroundings.

Captain Pedro surveyed the wrecked suite and the sliding windows, then turned to Lugano with a deep inquiry, "Is this the power of your employer? I heard stories of someone practicing sea wave magic at the bar tonight. Was that a genuine wave?"

"Yes." Although Lugano was uncertain about the events unfolding, he attributed the display of nature's power to his employer.

He added, "He's extending his greeting."

Captain Pedro and Father Montserrat fell into contemplative silence.

After more than ten seconds, Pedro addressed Father Montserrat, who seemed to be in his thirties,"Does the Church possess knowledge of such surgeries and rituals?"

Montserrat glanced at Lugano, indicating that the conversation need not be private.

The priest reflected for a moment before responding in a solemn tone, "There exists a faction of misguided Mother believers who contend that the decline of the modern world and the debasement of humanity result from their estrangement from the Mother.

"They are determined to employ any means to usher in the so-

called Child of God into the real world and invoke the Mother's descent through the return of the Child of God.

“We refer to them as the School of God’s Descent.”

Unconvinced, Lugano inquired, “You can summon a Child of God simply by using the internal organs of ordinary people?”

While he lacked knowledge about the specific surgery and ritual, he could deduce that internal organs were a crucial component.

Montserrat contemplated the remaining human organs in the suite and responded gravely,

“The Child of God is the Mother’s child, and humans are also Mother Goddess’s children.”

Does this imply that, fundamentally, no one is superior or inferior, and they can serve as ingredients with quantity compensating for any shortcomings? Lugano grasped the essence of the priest’s statement, realizing how many rituals involving blood sacrifices could be explained by this theory.

Father Montserrat offered no further explanation and turned to Lugano.

“Convey to your employer that we will take charge from here. Assure him not to worry.”

“Very well.” Lugano sighed with relief.

…

The next morning, Lumian woke up promptly and realized he no longer possessed the power of the sea, preventing him from tapping into the Governor of the Sea’s authority.

He took a regretful sip of his light beer and commenced writing to Madam Magician, detailing the issues with the School of God’s Descent and the purported birth of the Child of God in the spirit world.

Swiftly, the messenger returned, carrying Madam Magician’s response:

“Encountering the School of God’s Descent—I can’t ascertain whether the issue lies with you or Lugano.

“The so-called Child of God has already been born in the spirit world—it’s merely propaganda, you understand? Similar to the Church of The Fool’s Holy Bible—just listen but don’t take it seriously.

“Nevertheless, comparable incidents are unfolding, and they are brewing and evolving. This actually ties back to you. It originated from Cordu’s empty cradle, the child Madame Pualis ‘lost.’

“Additionally, based on various sources, Madame Night didn’t perish in Fourth Epoch Trier. She encountered or acquired something that advanced the matter of the Child of God.

“Besides her, the Sinners’ Voisin Sanson managed to escape Fourth Epoch Trier for unknown reasons. What he encountered remains unknown…

Voisin Sanson is still alive? Lumian was initially taken aback by the revelation in the middle of the letter, but a smile soon crept across his face.

At that moment, a knock echoed on his bedroom door.

“Who is it?” Lumian, aware that it was Lugano outside, asked casually.

Lugano replied fearfully through the wooden door, “I-I heard a baby crying again!”

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Chapter 605 - 605 Lingering Effects

605 Lingering Effects

Hearing the cries of a baby again? Is he pestered by the so-called Child of God? Lumian held Madam Magician's reply, unfinished, and adjusted his sitting posture with amusement. He gazed at the door and said, "Come in."

Lugano turned the handle and cautiously pushed open the door, uncomfortably stopping in front of Lumian.

His actions and demeanor, combined with his thick eyebrows, large eyes, and square face, made him appear rather comical.

"Isn't that evil Warlock, the old man n-named Prinpino, already dead? Why can I still hear the cries of a baby?" Lugano inquired with concern, his tone reflecting it.

Having consulted the just-awakened Ludwig, he had received an answer that he hadn't heard the baby's cries.

Lumian playfully shook the letter in his hand and chuckled.

"There are two possibilities. One is that Prinpino's accomplices on the ship also possess the ritual to summon the Child of God. The other possibility is…

Lugano pressed impatiently, "What is it?"

Lumian glanced at the Doctor and grinned.

"Perhaps the unborn Child of God has taken a liking to you and wants to choose you as his surrogate mother. Thus, even though Prinpino is already dead, he's unwilling to leave you and continues to linger by your side. Normally, he can't be seen or sensed."

Lugano's scalp tingled as he listened. Ignoring the question of why he was a mother and not a father, he stammered, "W-what should I do?"

"No rush." Lumian smiled.

"There's no need to hurry in such circumstances." Lugano felt like his internal organs might be devoured by the so-called Child of God at any moment, leaving only an empty cavity.

"Of course," Lumian said in a relaxed state. "Aren't you still alive? Since you're not dead, it means the situation isn't very serious. You can take it slow. There's no

hurry."

That seems to be the case… Lugano, caught up in the conversation, nodded and asked in confusion, "Must I die before the problem becomes serious enough for it to become urgent?"

Lumian chuckled and said, "No, it means there's zero need to rush.

"If you're already dead, what's the hurry? Can I revive you?"

In short, there's no need to rush? Lugano was taken aback.

Though he harbored doubts, his employer's ability to crack jokes and play pranks reassured him.

Evidently, his employer didn't view the baby's cries as a grave concern!

Only then did Lumian unveil his true speculation.

"There's a third possibility. The corruption you suffered upon contact with Enio won't dissipate so quickly, and it's highly likely that it won't vanish naturally. Consequently, you'll still form a connection with the unborn Child of God."

"Then, how do I eliminate the corruption?" Lugano accepted this explanation and believed that a solution existed.

Lumian didn't immediately respond to his question. He let Lugano stand in front of him as he perused the rest of Madam Magician's reply.

"Considering your link to the Child of God and the evil god's angel sealed within you, encountering a member of the School of God's Descent isn't a mere coincidence.

"However, your interpreter and guide are of the Planter pathway—that raises other issues. It's only natural for you to encounter matters connected to the Great Mother.

"As for the problem, ponder it and inquire within yourself. I won't spoon-feed you the answer. Conspirers need to employ their brains more…"

Observing this, Lumian looked up at Lugano without uttering a word. The Doctor's body tensed, and a thin layer of sweat trickled down his back.

"Is—is there any other problem?" Lugano stammered.

Lumian reclined in his chair and said contemplatively, "Clearing corruption is an entirely separate course in mysticism. I need to grasp the specifics before providing an answer."

Having underscored the significance, he inquired, "Have you encountered similar situations before? Like peculiar infant cries, mystical occurrences linked to births,

sorcery entwined with mothers, and so forth."

Lugano dared not be careless, fearing that if the corruption wasn't rectified promptly, he might end up as an organless being.

He meticulously sifted through his experiences over the years. After a moment, he tentatively said, "There's something I'm not sure if it's relevant…"

It was clear that he was reluctant to discuss the matter.

"How am I supposed to know if it's relevant if you don't tell me?" Lumian didn't care about privacy.

After a brief pause, Lugano cleared his throat and said, "Didn't I mention that I became a Beyonder by obtaining a friend's relic?"

"Yes, did you murder that friend?" Lumian inquired deliberately.

Lugano hastily shook his head.

"No, he committed suicide."

"Suicide?" Lumian raised his eyebrows, finding this matter intriguing.

Lugano finally gathered the courage and spilled it out in one go, "When I worked as a bounty hunter, I utilized the hidden mountain ranges in the Dariège mountain range for smuggling operations. I moved things back and forth, making a decent sum. I even aided some wanted criminals in escaping overseas. Tanko was one of them, but his escape wasn't from Intis to Feynapotter. Instead, he fled from Feynapotter to Intis.

"Eventually, he discovered a secluded valley deep within the mountain range and built a field of his own. He cultivated crops, tended to livestock, and kept to himself. I regularly visited, supplying him with essentials like salt, sugar, fabric, and other goods. In return, Tanko imparted mystic knowledge.

"I never imagined leading an ordinary life, with me out there adventuring and becoming a bounty hunter. Mysticism held a strong allure for me, and the teachings imparted by Tanko seemed invaluable at times.

"Tanko could be an enigma. Sometimes, he'd fall into brooding silence, his temper as hard and unyielding as stone, as if wrestling with inner demons. Other times, he'd be buoyant and loquacious, curious about everything around him.

"Every so often, he'd confess to straying from the Mother's teachings, descending into the depths of darkness. He'd lament how he drifted further from his true self, suffering the consequences. Occasionally, he'd voice suspicions about the Church, believing it to be deceptive, claiming the true Mother had departed long ago…"

In that moment, Lugano couldn't help but draw parallels between Tanko's cryptic musings and the philosophy of the School of God's Descent, as recounted by

Father Montserrat.

Was this encounter a foreshadowing, planted in the past? Lugano drew in a deep breath, sensing an ominous shiver down his spine.

He rushed out his words.

“Last autumn, I revisited Tanko. We sipped his brew and discussed various things beyond the mountain.

“Out of the blue, he spilled that he couldn’t endure his decadent, sinful self any longer. The demon lurking deep within him was gaining control. Tanko wanted to end his life before it consumed him entirely. His dying wish? I deliver his stuff to Torres, the capital of Gaia Province, and hand it over to a Church of Earth Mother clergyman, preferably a Blessed.

“I pretended to agree, talked him out of it, and thought he had abandoned the idea. But the next morning, I found him dead in the field where he’d harvested grain. Golden wheat ears sprouted from his body. And, get this, he had several female reproductive organs.

“I was freaked out. Felt like I was dealing with a monster.

“Now, for us bounty hunters, a dead monster is a good monster. It’s material for a paycheck.

“Summoning courage, I went through Tanko’s things. Found a golden blob, like a grain seed, but half the size of a fist, next to him.

“Based on Tanko’s mystic know-how, I suspected this blob was the root of his Beyonder powers.

“After much internal wrestling, I debated whether to stick to our agreement and send this relic back to the Church. But in the end, greed got the better of me, and I devoured the blob.

“I’m a guilty man. Broke my promise. Hoping the Sun forgives me.”

Lumian listened in silence, a chuckle escaping his lips.

“You just ate it like that?”

Lugano grinned sheepishly and explained, “Yep, that’s right. I only learned potion formulas after becoming a Beyonder and diving into mysticism. I didn’t want a repeat of that experience, so I got obsessed with buying formulas.”

“You’re lucky. A few years earlier, and surviving that would’ve been tough. We might’ve crossed paths in the Dariège mountain range, you as a monster and me as a monster hunter,” Lumian recalled President Gandalf’s research and mocked Lugano.

Internally, Lumian muttered, Emperor Roselle was right. The ignorant are fearless… Something's obviously off with Tanko. He probably got tangled with the evil god's faith, corrupting the Beyonder characteristic he left behind. Eating it directly… no wonder you encountered the School of God's Descent and heard baby cries. Easy to be corrupted and influenced, encountering patients like Enio.

Uneasy, Lugano asked, "Was the Planter ingredient I consumed the root of the problem?"

He had ingested it a year prior, and even advanced. Was there no resolution to the problem?

Lumian, seemingly avoiding Lugano's beseeching gaze, feigned deep consideration as he perused the concluding segment of Madam Magician's response.

"I've pondered your earlier caution and have some theories, but presently, I cannot divulge them to you. I can only hint that Amon and the person behind Him must have orchestrated something beforehand to divert the Celestial Worthy's attention from the pertinent issue.

"In essence, this situation seems advantageous for you and the rest of us. For now, it's best to feign ignorance and refrain from delving into it.

"If troubled by infantile cries, seek aid from a clergyman of the Church of Earth Mother."

Wh… Did Madam Magician anticipate Lugano's lingering effects in advance? It seems so. She could discern the root cause of Lugano's plight… Lumian looked up, offering Lugano a reassuring smile.

"The remedy to purge the corruption lies in seeking aid from Father Montserrat."

That's it? After all my exposition? If there's truly no alternative, I would've taken my chances with the priest… Lugano's lips twitched as he mustered a strained smile.

"Very well, thank you, sir."

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Chapter 606 - 606 Faith Conversion

606 Faith Conversion

At 8 a.m., in the prayer room on the third floor of the cabin, Lugano stepped in. Father Montserrat, draped in a brown priest's robe, was already preaching. Five or six individuals were scattered in the rows of chairs before the Sacred Emblem of Life.

Without disturbing the sanctified ambiance, Lugano chose a spot at the front, near a supplicant.

As Father Montserrat concluded his sermon and closed the Holy Bible, the supplicants rose, spread their feet, and raised their palms high, chanting in unison, "Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!"

Lugano instinctively turned his head, noticing a tightly-wrapped up supplicant with brown eyes and a pale complexion in the same row—Enio, the special patient who had lost his internal organs.

H-he's not dead? Wait, isn't the evil warlock, Prinpino, supposed to be dead? Why is Enio, the special patient, still alive? Lugano was stunned, almost convinced he'd encountered a ghost.

Being a Sequence 8 of the Planter pathway, he was ill-equipped to handle ghosts.

But then, Lugano observed that Enio's face wasn't as deathly pale as before. The brilliance in his eyes had returned, and vitality coursed through him.

Wh… Lugano raised his hand, tapping his glabella to activate his Spirit Vision.

He observed Enio's Ether Body, no longer as ashen as before. Whether it be the yellow hue symbolizing the digestive system, the orange hue denoting detoxification and organ excretion, or other shades, they had reverted to a semblance of normalcy, albeit faint and thin.

Is that even possible? Hadn't he lost his heart, liver, spleen, lungs, intestines, stomach, and kidneys? Lugano stared at Enio as though he were an aberration until Enio pivoted and pleasantly recognized him.

"Doctor, your treatment works wonders. I feel like I'm recovering!" Enio exclaimed joyously.

And this was just the initial treatment sans pinpointing the specific cause!

Lugano's lips twitched stiffly.

"That's reassuring, indeed."

"Are you also a follower of Earth Mother?" Enio beamed, pleasantly surprised.

I'm not. Spare me the talk of Mother God or Mother… As an Intisian, how can I subscribe to the Earth Mother faith? Lugano gestured toward Montserrat, evading a direct response.

"I need to discuss matters with the priest."

Enio nodded.

"When can I seek further treatment in the morning?"

You don't require treatment anymore. It's time for recuperation and repose… Lugano grumbled, forcing a smile.

"In about an hour."

"Thank you, Doctor!" Enio waved, exiting the prayer room.

When only Lugano and Father Montserrat remained, Lugano hushed his voice, gesturing toward the door.

"H-how was he healed?"

Father Montserrat, still relatively youthful with sincere eyes, smiled and responded, "Thanks to Earth Mother, his fortune was favorable.

"As a Doctor yourself, you must be aware that internal organs can be transplanted as long as they maintain a certain level of vitality. For the ritual to succeed, Prinpino utilized his Beyonder powers to sustain the vitality of those internal organs. Moreover, the set he employed was extracted from Enio, eliminating the need to consider transplant rejection effects.

"Furthermore, Enio remained alive, relying on mystical power to uphold a certain level of vitality. This was a crucial factor."

"Did you perform surgery on him last night and transplant all his internal organs back?" Lugano was enlightened.

Father Montserrat nodded.

"For regular surgeons, this is an operation with nearly zero chances of success. Even if successful, keeping the patient alive long enough to navigate the most perilous stage is challenging. However, for us, it falls within our capabilities."

Indeed… Compared to ordinary surgeons, Beyonder Doctors like us wield mystical powers akin to miracle-workers… Lugano sighed, dismissing further concern about Enio. Turning to Montserrat, he inquired with worry, “Father, I heard a baby crying again.

“Has that so-called Child of God set his sights on me?”

Father Montserrat reassured him, “Fear not. It’s an inevitable repercussion of the corresponding corruption. It will gradually dissipate over time. If you’re concerned about any unforeseen events or accidents on your path, I can help you eliminate them now.”

Is that so? You’re merely a Sequence 8 Doctor. Do you possess the capability to rid me of the remaining corruption? Set up an altar and seek Earth Mother’s aid? Lugano remained skeptical.

“Thank you, Father!”

Montserrat gestured toward Lugano’s previous spot.

“Follow the believers’ example. Close your eyes, listen to my preaching, and simultaneously, pray to Earth Mother. Remember, it’s specifically to Earth Mother, no other deity.”

“Understood.” Lugano resumed his seat, crossed his arms, and shut his eyes.

As Father Montserrat delivered his sermon, Lugano silently echoed the verses of the Holy Bible. Gradually, his thoughts blurred, and amidst the discourse, Lugano discerned a mother’s gentle murmur and felt the comforting warmth of her embrace.

His tense heart eased, reminiscent of seeking solace in his mother’s arms after childhood bullying.

It was a blend of dependency, reliance, and a sanctuary for the mind.

Unbeknownst to him, tears trickled down Lugano’s cheeks, as if purifying his body and soul.

Slowly, his emotions settled, dispelling the fear and unease.

“Done.” Father Montserrat’s voice seemed to waft from the distance, reaching Lugano’s ears.

Opening his eyes, Lugano raised his right hand, wiping away the tears.

Standing up, he lifted his hands.

“Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!”

It was an almost reflexive response.

In that moment, sunlight streamed through the window, casting a faint golden glow upon the prayer room, as if heralding forthcoming abundance.

Father Montserrat nodded in satisfaction.

“Earth Mother has purged the corruption from your body. Tonight, pay attention and see if you still hear the baby’s cries.”

“Alright, Father!” Lugano replied, his body and mind now at ease.

The next morning, he awoke with a sense of happiness.

Throughout the night, he experienced no dreams of a beckoning mother, nor did he hear the cries of the so-called Child of God.

Filled with joy, Lugano, after serving Ludwig breakfast, hurried to the prayer room to share the uplifting news with Father Montserrat.

Father Montserrat gazed at him for a moment and asked with a smile, “Are you interested in embracing Mother Earth?”

“Me?” Lugano hesitated before inquiring, “Are you willing to accept the conversion of a heretic?”

Father Montserrat smiled and replied, “In the Mother’s eyes, there are no heretics. There are only children who are or are not willing to return home.”

Lugano’s heart wavered, reflecting on his past actions of merely going through the motions in cathedrals—praying, listening to preaching, and attending Mass. He hadn’t truly believed in any deity, and the Church hadn’t provided substantial assistance.

Moreover, if I truly become a believer in Earth Mother, I might gain access to subsequent potion formulas and Beyonder ingredients from the Church or the three Orders… Even if not, I’ll surely receive corresponding mysticism guidance… Lugano hesitated, finding various excuses to convince himself.

Father Montserrat patiently waited, not pressuring him. He simply smiled, anticipating Lugano’s decision.

Eventually, Lugano raised his hands.

“Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!”

He responded to Father Montserrat’s proselytization in this manner.

Father Montserrat’s smile broadened as he extended his arms.

“Welcome home.”

Those words oddly warmed Lugano’s heart. It felt as though, after years of wandering and adventuring, he had finally returned home.

Fatigue lifted, and a sense of grounding enveloped him.

“Praise Mother Earth.” Lugano crossed his arms over his chest.

Father Montserrat nodded and commenced his true preaching.

“You believe in the source of life, the mother of all things, the propagation of the fertile land, the symbol of the crimson moon and reproduction, as well as the destination and the starting point of everything…”

Lugano listened attentively, committing the information to memory.

Though not devout yet, this might become his future sanctuary. He recognized the importance of presenting his good side at all times.

…

Upon returning to the first-class suite, Lugano glanced nervously at Lumian, who was engrossed in studying the Southern Continent’s Dutanese, and stammered, “I-I’ve changed my faith to Earth Mother.”

As a fellow Intisian, would he despise and scorn me?

Lumian looked up and chuckled.

“Then make sure to radiate maternal brilliance. Ludwig is counting on you for some fresh fish.”

He doesn’t mind at all… Lugano mumbled, not willing to let Ludwig go hungry. He embarked on a busy day.

Late at night, after tending to Ludwig until bedtime, Lugano pondered briefly and decided to visit the prayer room.

If the door was still ajar, he intended to offer a prayer before retiring for the night.

He had to make a good impression right from the beginning!

Lugano treaded the dimly lit stairs, approaching the prayer room with cautious steps on the creaking floor.

His footfalls grew hushed, wary of disturbing those engaged in prayer and potentially interrupting Father Montserrat’s embodiment of Mother Earth’s teachings through reproductive activities with a female believer.

Reaching the door quietly, Lugano extended his right hand, gently pushing it open.

The wooden door eased ajar, revealing a small gap without a sound.

It's not shut tight… Is he truly in the midst of reproduction? Lugano cautiously peered into the opening.

He observed the crimson moonlight enveloping the prayer room and Father Montserrat, draped in a brown priest's robe, standing before the Sacred Emblem of Life. Folding his arms, Father Montserrat swayed gently, as if cradling a newborn child.

However, there was nothing within his embrace.

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Chapter 607 - 607 Smell of Food

607 Smell of Food

Lugano's scalp tingled as he found himself in a surreal encounter with Father Montserrat, bathed in the glow of the crimson moonlight. The sight of the priest, cradling an invisible child in his arms, sent shivers down Lugano's spine.

Is he carrying a child?

An invisible child?

The so-called Child of God?

Frightened by the association, Lugano tried to quickly shut the door before the owner noticed, as if he had wandered into the wrong room. He slipped away without making a sound.

Suddenly, Father Montserrat's voice echoed in the air.

"Are you here for prayer?"

Lugano's eyes tightened, and like a startled wild cat, he swiftly turned and sprinted towards the staircase.

All he could think about at that moment was his formidable employer!

However, what met his eyes was utter darkness. No staircase with a wooden floor in sight.

In the shadows, clusters of pitch-black weeds, with plump wheat, swayed in eerie silence.

Lugano's body tensed, uncertain about the unknown that awaited him in this abyss of darkness.

"Why did you run?" The weeds parted, revealing Father Montserrat, holding an invisible baby. Behind him, an illusionary, unusually massive oak tree stood tall.

Next to the weeds, the oak tree was covered in abnormal growths, forming a chillingly simple and ominous Sacred Emblem of Life.

As Father Montserrat, clad in a brown priest's uniform, appeared less than three meters away, Lugano swallowed hard, offering a feeble excuse.

“It’s late. I didn’t want to disturb you.”

Father Montserrat remained cradling his arms, wearing a faint smile.

“What did you see?”

Every hair on Lugano’s neck stood on end, and cold sweat broke out on his back.

Struggling, Lugano pointed at Father Montserrat’s empty embrace, asking with difficulty, “Why are you doing this?”

Father Montserrat responded with a significant tone, “We’re all Mother’s children.”

Lugano didn’t dare to delve further and nodded repeatedly.

“Yes, yes, yes. We’re all Mother’s children.”

Father Montserrat didn’t allow him to navigate through with platitudes. He deliberately added,

“The child of the Great Mother.”

Great Mother… Although Lugano had anticipated this answer, his heart almost skipped a beat, and his mind went blank upon hearing it.

Seeing that Father Montserrat had made it explicit, Lugano had no choice but to inquire,

“Aren’t… aren’t you a follower of Earth Mother?”

Father Montserrat felt no remorse about betraying the Church of Earth Mother. He maintained a warm smile and explained, “Earth Mother is a facet of the Great Mother, a projection. In this role, she watches over the lands of betrayal and the children who have strayed from the Mother’s embrace.”

Gulp… Lugano instinctively swallowed, uncertain about how to counter Father Montserrat.

Having joined the Church of Earth Mother just a day ago and attended only two sermons, he lacked the profound theological knowledge to challenge such heretics.

He could, of course, outright deny it. After all, Montserrat’s explanation sounded ominous. If the priest’s words were true, with the Earth Mother Church’s resources and factions, the so-called Child of God should have already been born in the real world, and the Great Mother would have returned. Yet, that hadn’t happened.

The current scene and the invisible pressure silenced Lugano, refraining from outright denial.

What if he enraged Father Montserrat completely?

Father Montserrat continued, “All creatures in this world are the children of the Great Mother. Some were conceived by her, some are descendants of these deities, and some, like you and me, were directly transformed from the flesh and blood of the Great Mother. We share the strongest connection with her!”

Internally, Lugano couldn’t help but retort, I was born by my mother, not transformed from the flesh and blood of the Great Mother… However, his smile remained, more grimacing than joyous.

“Don’t you find the Great Mother’s believers sinister and terrifying?”

Father Montserrat smiled and reassured, “There’s no need to fear the return of the Great Mother. How can a mother hate her child?

“You might not know, but there are many worlds beyond ours. The creatures in those places flourish under the watch of the Great Mother, constantly reproducing and growing. I’ve never heard of any species being eradicated. Instead, their numbers are increasing.

“Moreover, it’s the Great Mother who granted us life. It’s her prerogative to reclaim the life she bestowed upon us. We should cooperate willingly.”

Cooperate my rear end, you son of a sow! Lugano wasn’t bewitched. Suddenly, he drew his concealed revolver and fired two shots at Father Montserrat.

Without confirming the effectiveness of the shots, he swiftly turned and sprinted toward the dark expanse filled with black weeds.

Though the destination within the dark depths was unknown, perhaps harboring great peril, staying here seemed even more hazardous!

“Waaa!”

Abruptly, Lugano heard an almost ethereal cry of an infant.

It was exactly the same as the sounds he had heard several times before.

Lugano’s expression froze, and his pace slowed as he ran.

His eyes gradually filled with emptiness, and he turned around. Step by step, he approached Father Montserrat, who was cradling an invisible baby, and the illusory, colossal oak tree.

“That’s our mother…

“The mother who gave us life…

“She’s willing to accept anyone who repents, every child who returns home…

“If she wants to take back the life she bestowed upon us, then let her. She has the prerogative to reclaim what she gave…”

Listening to Father Montserrat’s abnormally ethereal yet seemingly close voice, Lugano gradually developed a strong and heartfelt acceptance.

Yes, that’s my mother…

Why would she harm me?

She can take back what she had given…

Lugano walked faster and faster until he stood beside Father Montserrat.

Instantly, he felt warmth and relief. It was the scent of a mother’s embrace.

Gradually, he experienced an indescribable moist sensation, as if a kitten were being licked by a female cat.

How comforting… Lugano half-closed his eyes.

At that moment, he heard his mother’s favorite nursery rhyme

—from behind him.

Why is Mom behind me? Shouldn’t she be in front? Lugano wondered vaguely.

Then, he heard his mother shouting behind him, “Don’t go over!

“Don’t move forward!

“Danger!”

Don’t go over… Don’t move forward… Danger… Lugano shuddered, his vacant eyes regaining a certain vigor.

He saw where he was—the illusory colossal oak tree and moist, warm, squirming flesh petals sprouting from it. Half of his body was already enveloped in the flesh petals, slowly pulling inward.

This was the motherly embrace he had just experienced.

Lugano’s pupils dilated, and a chill ran down his spine, causing his hair to stand on end.

He exerted strength against the viscous liquid-covered flesh with both hands, swiftly pulling away.

Father Montserrat, cradling an invisible baby, appeared beside Lugano, wearing a warm smile.

“Return. Return to the Mother’s embrace and revert to our original form.”

Despair gripped Lugano.

He wanted to confront the priest, but sadly, having consumed two potions—Planter and Doctor—he realized that, apart from enhanced strength and proficiency with farming tools and a scalpel, he lacked Beyonder powers directly applicable in combat. These powers included predicting the weather, identifying and nurturing seeds, treating ailments, healing wounds, stitching up souls, bestowing life, or possessing outstanding surgical abilities.

In the past, Lugano had relied on the combat techniques and marksmanship learned as a bounty hunter to match a Planter’s strength and firearms.

Nevertheless, not resisting at a moment like this meant certain death. Lugano, an adventurer with a history of killing, faced immense fear as he fired at Father Montserrat and drew a sharp scalpel.

…

In Lumian’s first-class cabin suite,Lumian, still engrossed in the Dutanese textbook under the kerosene wall lamp, heard a knock on the door.

Perplexed, he stood up, opened the door, and found Ludwig.

Ludwig, clad in grayish-white checkered pajamas top and pants, spoke gravely,

“Lugano has encountered an accident. Hurry up and save him.”

An accident? Lumian arched his eyebrows.

Knowing that Lugano could still hear the baby’s cries, Lumian had discreetly heightened his surveillance and attention on the servant, including just now.

But how could an accident occur when Lugano had entered the Earth Mother Church’s prayer room?

Ludwig continued, “I couldn’t sense his scent after he entered the prayer room.”

“What scent?” Lumian inquired casually, already forming a vague suspicion.

Ludwig responded nonchalantly,”The smell of food.”

Lumian stretched his neck and wrists, regarding Ludwig thoughtfully.

“You deliberately sniffed his scent.”

Ludwig’s chubby cheeks displayed an expression that said, “What’s so odd about that?”

“If he perishes and you’re busy elsewhere, who will assist me in gathering food?”

“That’s a valid point.” Lumian grinned.

…

In the darkness, enveloped by black weeds, Lugano’s scalpel sliced through the air as he attempted to strike Father Montserrat.

“Waaa!”

The baby’s cries echoed once more, leaving Lugano in a momentary daze, teetering on the edge of losing control.

With the invisible baby cradled in his arms, Montserrat manifested on the colossal illusory oak tree and smiled down at Lugano.

“Don’t resist. We originated from the Mother, and we shall return to her.”

Just as the priest, with clear eyes and a warm smile, finished speaking, a knock on the door reverberated in the seemingly endless darkness, echoing among the weeds with abundant wheat.

Upon hearing the polite knock on the door, Lugano had an inexplicable thought.

How polite—to knock at the door in such a situation…

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Chapter 608 - 608 The Way to Find Prey

608 The Way to Find Prey

The rhythmic thumping echoed only three times before escalating into a resounding bang.

As the sturdy wooden door flung open, the corridor bathed in the glow of kerosene wall lamps revealed a darkness entwined with overgrown weeds. Crimson flames surged forth, casting an eerie illumination.

In Lugano's gaze, the illusion of the oak tree abruptly dissipated, along with Father Montserrat, cradling an unseen infant in his arms.

Amidst the fiery chaos, the weeds withered, and the shadows dispersed. Lugano found himself "returned" to the humble prayer room, now aglow with the crimson moonlight.

Lumian, sporting a golden straw hat, emerged at the entrance. His eyes scanned every nook, yet Father Montserrat remained elusive.

Powers akin to the Paramita world merged with other traits, albeit incapable of creating a sufficiently independent world separate from reality. It resembles Demon Warlock Burman gaining unique abilities through a forceful transition of pathways… Where is he hiding now? Drawing from Ludwig's knowledge from his food, Beyonders of the School of God's Descent can conceal themselves in woodwork. Although I can't confirm Father Montserrat's corrupted affiliation with the School, the influence of the Great Mother is evident… Lumian swiftly assessed the unfolding scenario.

The lack of resistance from Father Montserrat, who refrained from fleeing or hiding, didn't surprise Lumian.

Performing the wave magic in the ship's bar had been a casual display, not wanting to waste the temporary Governor of the Sea authority. However, the subsequent use of the colossal wave to "greet" Captain Pedro and Father Montserrat wasn't mere showmanship.

Unaware if the School of God's Descent incident had concluded or if hidden Great Mother devotees lingered on the ship, Lumian deliberately showcased the might of a demigod Governor of the Sea to instill fear!

If there were no other Great Mother adherents or lurking threats, his “greeting” actions could be seen as showmanship. But if danger lurked, it would make the elusive elements cautious, forcing them to retreat deeper into hiding. Lumian planned to let the ship reach the next port, leaving the Church of Earth Mother authorities to deal with them.

Father Montserrat, seemingly unwilling to face the adventurer Louis Berry head-on and his demigod prowess, opted for concealment, biding his time until the ship docked.

Had Lugano not luckily or unluckily stumbled upon the priest cradling the unseen infant, Father Montserrat might have continued portraying himself as a competent clergyman of the Church of Earth Mother, avoiding any confrontation with Louis Berry.

“F-Father Montserrat is a believer in the Great Mother! He was cradling an invisible baby!” Lugano hastily reported to Louis Berry, now realizing the gravity of the situation.

Cradling an invisible baby… He could be hiding within the ship’s woodwork. Lumian scanned the surroundings, inspecting chairs, the floor, and the Sacred Emblem of Life adorning the wooden wall.

In an abrupt realization, he felt a stir in his heart as he approached the Sacred Emblem embodying Earth Mother.

Adorned with symbols of wheat, flowers, and spring water at the periphery, at its core lay a simple depiction of a baby.

A baby!

Advancing further, crimson flames radiated, setting the wooden floorboards and chairs ablaze.

Coming to a halt before the Sacred Emblem of Life, Lumian extended his right hand, gently caressing the baby’s face.

The wood instantly deteriorated, exuding a yellowish pus.

It seemed that the depiction of a baby surrounded by wheat and flowers had long decayed, shedding tears of blood.

There’s a huge problem with the Church of Earth Mother… Lumian narrowed his eyes.

While unable to pinpoint the elusive Father Montserrat, he unearthed decay and darkness lurking beneath the veneer of the Church of Earth Mother.

Observing the charred remains of the woodwork and finding no trace of Father Montserrat, with more wooden hiding spots on the steel steam ship, Lumian

turned and addressed Lugano, “Take me to the captain’s cabin.”

“Alright.” Lugano visibly relaxed.

Exiting the prayer room, the crimson flames within swiftly extinguished, ceasing their advance.

Inside the captain’s cabin, Pedro, spotting a handsome brown beard, grimaced as adventurer Louis Berry approached.

Experienced as he was, he knew that there might be trouble on the ship.

During the School of God’s Descent incident, Adventurer Louis Berry had only dispatched a servant to explain matters. Now, here he was personally visiting!

What did this signify?

It pointed to a more severe complication!

Without awaiting the captain’s inquiry, Lumian calmly asserted, “Father Montserrat has succumbed, aligning himself with an evil deity. He likely colluded with the School of God’s Descent’s evil warlock.”

Captain Pedro’s mind jolted as if struck by a rod, momentarily buzzing and going blank.

After a brief pause, he cautiously inquired, “Have you already killed him?”

“Not yet,” Lumian truthfully responded. “He escaped the prayer room and is now in hiding. Dispatch a telegram promptly, reporting this to the Church of Earth Mother and the Feynapotter government. My servant will provide the details.”

In the face of Louis Berry’s authoritative directive, Captain Pedro yielded without resistance. He shifted his attention to Lugano, absorbing the account of his conversion and Father Montserrat’s description, cradling an invisible infant.

Upon hearing the revelation, Pedro wore a bitter expression and admitted, “I did sense something amiss with Father Montserrat, but I never anticipated it to be this grave.”

“What’s the issue?” Lumian inquired.

Pedro sighed, explaining, “He’s a Favored, a Beyonder of the Earth pathway, the most orthodox clergyman. Typically, he needs a Blessed’s help to conduct Mass, preach to believers, and guide others into the Church. However, he’s the only Favored on this ship without a Blessed.”

“I initially thought the shortage of staff in Port Santa was due to the sea prayer ritual, so I didn’t pay much heed. But now, with Father Montserrat’s fall…”

Only with the assistance of a Blessed can one conduct Mass and preach to believers. There's no Blessed following him… Lumian had previously learned that Favored of the Church of Earth Mother needs at least one second-in-command Blessed for their decisions to be considered valid. Otherwise, it risks being perceived as an influence of an evil god or a demon… An evil god… That Great Mother? Wh… Combined with recent events and his prior knowledge, Lumian suddenly grasped why the Church of Earth Mother maintained two distinct systems—

Blessed and Favored—rather than merging them.

Madam Magician of the Apprentice pathway had mentioned occasional influence from the Celestial Worthy, unsure if it was a revelation from Mr. Fool.

Similar to the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings overseeing the Apprentice, Seer, and Marauder pathways, the Great Mother likely stood atop the Planter, Apothecary, and Villain pathways.

As a result, Favored Beyonders of the Planter and Apothecary pathways would also be under the influence of the Great Mother. The origin of the revelation, whether from Earth Mother or the Great Mother, remained unclear. Confirmation required the input of Blessed from pathways outside these two. Simultaneously, Blessed monitored the status of the Favored!

That explains it… Indeed, there's a profound and serious reason behind this seemingly absurd, wasteful, and unreasonable system design, Lumian concluded. Without further words, he instructed Captain Pedro, "Send the telegram."

After the captain relayed Father Montserrat's situation to the Feynapotter government and the Church of Earth Mother, Lumian contemplated how to locate Father Montserrat.

Considering the vast sea surrounding them, unless Father Montserrat possessed teleportation or exceptional underwater travel abilities, he could only be hiding somewhere on the ship.

Lumian dismissed the idea of involving his Major Arcana card holder for such a trivial issue and resolved to devise a solution himself.

Could I use the ship's megaphone to insult the Great Mother, provoking Father Montserrat to reveal himself? The challenge lies in the inability to lock onto a target, potentially yielding less-than-optimal results…

Burning all the ship's woodwork? Seems like a last resort due to the presence of valuable goods in wooden crates…

Borrowing a bottle of Prophetic Concoction from Franca? It requires a fresh corpse. Additionally, if Franca is involved, I could get her to directly employ Magic Mirror Divination…

Playing the Symphony of Hatred bone flute and informing passengers to cover their ears prior to that? But it only reduces damage without averting the effects…

Right, ask Ludwig if he recalls Father Montserrat's small…

Also… Yes, I can give it a try!

Lumian quickly came up with several solutions and decided to systematically test each one, reserving seeking help as a final option.

He bid farewell to the captain and, under the cover of night, led Lugano back to the first-class cabin suite.

"Do you recall Father Montserrat's scent?" Lumian inquired of Ludwig.

Ludwig shook his head.

"No direct contact."

"Fair enough." Lumian turned around, offering a reassuring smile to Lugano. "I have an experiment in mind. Work with me."

"What kind of experiment?" Lugano asked, a tremor of fear evident.

Lumian gestured towards the window.

"Go to the deck. It's more open there."

Uneasily, Lugano descended to the deck, bathed in the crimson moonlight. His employer pulled out a full-body silver armor from his Traveler's Bag, revealing an inscrutable smile.

Lumian recalled the Pride Armor's particular disdain for items from the Earth and Evernight pathways.

What if it wasn't an item but a Beyonder?

How would it react?

Could this hatred be harnessed to pinpoint Father Montserrat's location, given he was at least a Doctor, at a certain distance?

Lumian wasn't entirely sure, but he intended to experiment with Lugano, a fellow Beyonder of the Earth pathway, to explore the possibilities.

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Chapter 609 - 609 Useful Armor

609 Useful Armor

Lumian shot a quick smile at Lugano and fixed his gaze on the Pride Armor, carefully observing its reaction.

“What experiment? To test the effects of this armor?” Lugano questioned, a mix of apprehension and confusion in his voice.

As soon as he finished speaking, the air on the dark deck, bathed in the crimson moonlight, suddenly solidified.

In the next instant, the empty armor produced a radiant broadsword, and an unseen force locked onto Lugano.

Wh… Before Lugano could react, the silver-white full-body armor surged forward, the gleaming broadsword poised to strike.

In a split second, Lumian positioned himself in front of Lugano. His body expanded abruptly, almost tearing his linen shirt and black pants.

Bang!

Lumian’s massive fist collided with the Sword of Dawn, creating a metallic clang that resonated through the air.

Only then did Lugano shake off his bewilderment. Though unsure why the empty armor attacked him, he instinctively turned and sprinted away.

After covering some ground, the Pride Armor halted and stood silently.

The Sword of Dawn, fashioned from light, dissipated, turning into beams of light that dispersed the crimson moonlight, casting a dawn-like ambiance upon the dark deck.

This sensation vanished in the blink of an eye.

Lumian, not daring to turn his back on the Pride Armor, repositioned himself and gauged the distance between the armor and Lugano.

About 20 meters… factoring in Lugano’s running speed, the sensing range is approximately 15 meters… Lumian swiftly concluded. His body reverted to its original form, and a confident smile returned to his face.

It was enough. A fifteen-meter range sufficed on the ship!

He stowed away the Pride Armor and addressed Lugano, who was still making his way to the bow, “The experiment is over.”

Huh? Lugano came to a sudden halt, realizing that Lumian had already stashed the peculiar silver-white full-body armor back into the mystical item cleverly disguised as a coin bag.

Relieved, he jogged back, curiosity etched on his face as he inquired, “Did the experiment succeed?”

“Very successful,” Lumian replied, sporting a radiant smile.

Though Lugano didn’t grasp the experiment’s significance, he had a hunch that Lumian might be exploring a way to locate Father Montserrat.

Upon reaching the first-class suite, Lumian promptly instructed Lugano, “Go to the captain and ask him to gather all the Beyonders of the Earth pathway on the ship. Oh, and the Beyonders of the Apothecary pathway. I’ll be back after capturing Father Montserrat. It doesn’t matter if they don’t show up. They’ll bear the risk themselves.”

Unsure if Captain Pedro was aware of every unstable element on the ship and every Beyonder, Lumian planned to monitor the Pride Armor later to prevent it from targeting hidden wild Beyonders. Allowing Pedro to handle this process first would lighten his load.

As Lugano left the suite, Lumian turned to Ludwig, who had resumed his meal.

“Keep an eye out later and see if there’s any ‘food’ secretly lurking here.”

Ludwig, mouth full of cake, signaled his agreement.

Waiting for the captain’s arrival, Lumian patrolled the cabin’s top floor with the Pride Armor in his arms, but Father Montserrat remained elusive.

Before long, Pedro entered the suite with the suspected security supervisor and a passenger in a low hat.

Lumian didn’t delve into details and gestured toward the sofa.

“Wait for me here.”

Without waiting for a response, he pressed down on his golden straw hat and exited the room.

Upon reaching the staircase, Lumian “pulled” out his silver-white full-body armor. Gripping the Sealed Artifact’s armpits firmly with both hands, he methodically patrolled each level of the cabin.

Whenever he approached a distance less than 15 meters from his suite, Lumian exercised extra caution, yet the Pride Armor refrained from attacking anyone.

Could it be that, beyond five meters and with several layers of obstruction, the armor wouldn't exhibit any additional reactions? Lumian speculated as he descended floor by floor.

After nearly half an hour, he descended to the cargo cabin at the bottom.

Before maneuvering past stacks of wooden crates, the Pride Armor in Lumian's grasp suddenly quivered, breaking free from his control.

The silver-white full-body armor morphed a radiant broadsword. Advancing in two strides, it swung at a wooden box tucked in the corner.

With a resounding clang, the wooden box splintered, and a handful of steel ingots spilled out.

At the same moment, Montserrat's clean, youthful visage emerged from the broken box, materializing his entire body.

Confronted by the gleaming broadsword of light once more, the priest's initially sturdy frame bulked up, as if transforming into a formidable brown bear.

Bang! With a powerful palm strike, he sent the Sword of Dawn hurtling, landing atop a wooden crate of goods behind him.

This strength rivaled that of a true giant bear!

As Father Montserrat skillfully parried the Pride Armor's onslaught, Lumian, donned in a linen shirt, black vest, and a golden straw hat, materialized swiftly beside a stack of wooden crates behind him.

"Hmph!"

Two beams of white light shot from Lumian's nostrils, hitting Father Montserrat before he could even react.

Instantly, the priest's gaze lost focus, and he crumpled to the ground, unconscious.

With this turn of events, vitality surged through his body like a steam engine operating at full throttle.

The robust vitality manifested as an incredibly potent self-

healing ability, swiftly restoring Father Montserrat's spirit.

The Spell of Harrumph bore a resemblance to Psychic Piercing, both targeting the Spirit Body and proving challenging to defend against. However, while the latter induced uncontrollable pain, trapping the target, the former added a sleep-inducing

or unconscious state to the Spirit Body—a different form of harm.

Since it was an injury, it could be healed.

Empowered by the vigorous vitality's transformation, Father Montserrat's closed eyelids twitched as his eyeballs moved beneath them.

He nearly woke up before hitting the ground!

Yet, for Lumian, a mere second of restraint from the Spell of Harrumph was sufficient.

Considering that Father Montserrat might also be a product of human refinement, some abilities might not be effective. Lumian lunged at him, extending his right hand.

In his open palm, crimson flames coiled and compressed, forming a solid-looking sphere.

Simultaneously, the Pride Armor raised the Sword of Dawn once more.

Just as Father Montserrat opened his eyes and instinctively regained balance, he caught sight of Louis Berry's jade-green eyes, the dangerous crimson fireball almost white, and the broadsword of light slashing toward his head from the corner of his vision.

With only a moment to react, he twisted to the side to evade the Sword of Dawn, but Lumian pressed the crimson, nearly white fireball against him.

Boom!

In a resounding explosion, Father Montserrat was sent hurtling through the air.

Flesh and blood erupted from his right shoulder to his abdomen, bones fractured, and squirming internal organs were laid bare.

His right arm dangled, on the verge of detachment.

Yet, the robust vitality within Father Montserrat persisted. Flesh and blood wriggled within the gaping wound, miraculously healing.

Thud!

Father Montserrat crashed to the ground, accompanied by the heavy footsteps of the Pride Armor and the luminous slash of the broadsword.

Lifting his finger, the blood and flesh expelled from his body during the explosion swiftly coalesced, transforming into a blurry, thin blood-colored figure.

This figure lunged at the silver-white full-body armor, enveloping it and infiltrating its form.

Abruptly, the cargo hold was bathed in Sunrise Gleam. The blood-colored figure dissolved, gradually fading away.

The Sunrise Gleam was gentle, sparing Father Montserrat the instinctive need to shut his eyes. Consequently, his gaze reflected crimson, nearly white flaming ravens.

A dozen or so Fire Ravens circled Lumian, who casually kept one hand in his pocket. Their eyes fixed on Montserrat, tracing distinct trajectories as they soared.

Their aim was clear—to shred the target's body and set each piece of flesh ablaze, preventing recovery even with his potent self-healing abilities.

When each fragment was spaced 20 to 30 centimeters apart, their self-healing powers struggled to reunite them!

This wasn't flesh and blood magic!

Father Montserrat's pupils dilated, and his mouth instinctively opened, emitting a sinister yet intimate voice.

With the accompanying voice, a dense darkness descended, and wheat-filled weeds sprouted, devouring the Sunrise Gleam that bathed the warehouse.

In the darkness, some of the crimson, nearly white Fire Ravens lost their way, unable to traverse the "distant" space. Gradually, they dissipated—only a fraction successfully reaching Father Montserrat.

Amidst thunderous explosions, Father Montserrat's form turned translucent, giving rise to a colossal illusory oak tree in its place.

The oak tree stood unscathed amid the explosion and flames, and amidst the aftermath, the mangled form of Father Montserrat materialized on a branch adorned with mistletoe. He cradled his arms, as if holding an invisible infant.

Gazing at Lumian, he wore a genuine smile.

So you're not a demigod…

"Waaa!"

For the first time, Lumian heard the ethereal, hollow cry of the baby.

"Wah wah wah!"

Amidst the relentless cries, Lumian felt his vitality draining away. Gradually weakening, even his consciousness began to waver.

The depleted vitality seemed to flow towards the invisible baby in Father Montserrat's embrace, transforming into its nourishment.

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Chapter 610 - 610 “New Life”

610 “New Life”

In the face of the infant’s cries, which gradually weakened him, Lumian teleported immediately to Father Montserrat’s side, launching a powerful attack to disrupt the impending impact.

Yet, in that very moment, he observed the Pride Armor freezing in place upon hearing the infant’s cry. Suddenly, it crouched down and plunged the Sword of Dawn into the ground covered in dark weeds.

Dammit! Directly employing Hurricane of Light? Lumian’s scalp tingled. Without bothering to confirm, he shifted the teleportation destination, vanishing into the darkness of the illusory oak tree, and reappeared on the ship’s deck.

He had long recognized that Father Montserrat’s weed wilderness was inferior to the Madames’ Paramita. It failed to sever the deep connection between the inside and outside, nor could it prevent teleportation. Its sole capability was restraining various sounds and the aftermath of battle, akin to the Bottle of Fiction, if not less. Nonetheless, this wilderness had unique abilities.

As Lumian’s figure faded into the dark wilderness, the Sword of Dawn embedded in the ground by the Pride Armor shattered, transforming into countless light fragments, creating a formidable storm that engulfed the area.

The plump wheat-filled weeds were sliced into pieces, leaving the ground barren.

Father Montserrat, perched on the oak branch, couldn’t dodge in time. He only managed to manifest his body into something resembling wood before being consumed by the Hurricane of Light.

The illusory, hollow cry of a baby abruptly ceased.

When the Hurricane of Light subsided, Father Montserrat stood frozen in place.

In the next moment, his wood-like body, covered in brown bark, split open, revealing deep crevices.

Pa, pa, pa. Father Montserrat’s body fell to the bottom of the oak tree, piece by piece. The incisions were smooth, and blood seeped out.

Flesh and blood were instantly absorbed by the illusory oak tree’s roots, leaving nothing behind.

In the middle section of the oak tree, the bark split open. Squirming, moist flesh grew out, expanding into a hole.

A human head appeared, squeezed and ejected.

In the blink of an eye, the naked human was “born” by the illusory oak tree. It was Father Montserrat.

He retained his adult form, his body wet and partially covered in a dirty, translucent white membrane.

New life!

With the aid of the weed-covered darkness, the illusionary oak tree, and the invisible baby, Father Montserrat found a new lease of life!

His brow smoothed, and his eyes regained a youthful gleam. Enormous bat-like wings, shrouded in dark skin, erupted from his back, propelling him from the heart of the colossal oak to his silver-white full-body armor.

The Pride Armor rose, summoning light into its hand, forging a sharp spear.

Launching the elongated lance with relentless force, it sliced through the air, embedding into Father Montserrat’s chest.

Father Montserrat’s bat-like wings enveloped him, and his form shattered into palm-sized black bats.

In a mesmerizing dance, the bats circled behind the Pride Armor, reforming into Father Montserrat, adorned with a grimy membrane.

Father Montserrat’s body expanded, morphing into a colossal bear. From his palms sprouted sharp claws etched with enigmatic patterns.

With a forceful swipe, he etched five deep gouges onto the Pride Armor’s back, unveiling its hollow interior.

The Pride Armor froze, and the air itself seemed to still.

Before Father Montserrat could launch another assault, he noticed the silver-white full-body armor pivoting without warning.

Condensing hammers, axes, and flails made of light, it slashed at Father Montserrat frenziedly.

Father Montserrat lowered himself, shrinking to the cleared ground, inching towards the illusionary oak tree.

The ground beneath him caved, forming a rift.

In that moment, Lumian, sensing the end of the Hurricane of Light, teleported back into the darkness.

To his surprise, Father Montserrat stood unscathed, devoid of the brown priest's attire.

Undeterred, Lumian retrieved the Symphony of Hatred bone flute from his Traveler's Bag.

Seizing the moment while the Pride Armor entangled Father Montserrat, preventing the transmission of sound to the outside world, Lumian aimed to play a melody learned from Port Santa's various celebrations—composed by a Church of Earth Mother Saint for a bountiful harvest.

Typically, Lumian would don the Flog boxing gloves, "teleport" closer, stimulate some desire or emotion in Father Montserrat through a punch, and then play the Symphony of Hatred to trigger Flog's aftereffects. However, Lumian abandoned this well-practiced routine.

The peculiar illusionary oak tree on the battlefield gave him pause. Father Montserrat had carried an invisible baby, possibly a Child of God. Wearing the Flog boxing gloves could attract attention and danger.

If the Great Mother perceived it and allowed the Child of God to breach the illusory-reality barrier to confront him, the consequences would be dire!

Moreover, Lumian suspected that heretics like Montserrat harbored evident psychological issues, making their mental states unpredictable. Playing the Symphony of Hatred directly could exploit this vulnerability, much like how he and Mr. K detested hearing others play the Symphony of Hatred.

Uncertain about which weakness might be triggered or the ensuing changes, Lumian planned to roll with the uncertainties.

Just as Lumian raised the Symphony of Hatred to his lips, an eerie chill crawled down his spine.

"Waaa!"

The spectral baby's cries reverberated, mere inches from him.

"Hehe, hehe."

The baby's cries morphed into laughter, as if engaged in an intriguing game with Lumian.

An inexplicable stiffness gripped Lumian, freezing him momentarily.

A cold aura infiltrated his body, spreading gradually to his abdomen.

As his life began to ebb away, merging with the cold aura, the baby in his ear oscillated between mournful wails and gleeful laughter.

Without hesitation, Lumian plunged his consciousness into his right hand, activating Blood Emperor Alista Tudor's residual brand.

A violent and frenzied aura erupted from Lumian, enlarging him without relying on his Compression strength. Tangible bloodlust filled the air.

The invisible baby's cries and laughter abruptly ceased, and the coldness invading Lumian's body dissipated under the searing sensation. The dark wilderness swayed, casting a faint glow.

Lumian, in control, terminated the activation and blew into the black bone flute with blood-colored holes.

A noticeably jubilant melody echoed, stunning Father Montserrat locked in battle with the Pride Armor.

His face twisted in indescribable agony.

Witnessing the silver armor wielding a staff of condensed light, Father Montserrat instinctively reached out, pointing at the adversary's feet.

Countless vines, weeds, and tree branches sprouted rapidly, entwining the Pride Armor and impeding its movements.

Amidst the cacophony of crashing branches and tearing vines, the Pride Armor advanced laboriously, slowed by the entanglement.

Father Montserrat locked eyes with Lumian and, in a pained plea, shouted,

"Run!

"The Child of God can't be killed!"

Run? Wh… Lumian realized Father Montserrat seemed more grounded than before. The warmth in his gaze, the familiarity of home, replaced by agony and conflict.

"Run!

"Repent to Mother Earth on my behalf!"

Father Montserrat screamed in hysteria.

His naked form underwent an abnormal transformation. Organs, symbolic of creation and incubation, sprouted under the translucent, filthy white membrane, intertwining in a horrific display.

Repent to Mother Earth? Lumian vaguely understood Father Montserrat's current state.

His corruption appeared incomplete, retaining a side that clung to faith in Earth Mother, resulting in a split personality. Typically, the normal persona remained suppressed by the corrupted one.

Is this the problem that the Symphony of Hatred triggered, allowing Father Montserrat's normal personality to temporarily gain an advantage and regain control of his body? Lumian sighed, but this didn't prevent him from condensing crimson fireballs that were nearly white, launching them towards the mutated Father Montserrat.

Montserrat's countenance shifted between frigidity and anguish. His body alternated between evasion and restraint.

With all his might, he exclaimed, "The Child of God cannot be killed, only banished!"

As Father Montserrat spoke, the crimson fireballs, nearly white, exploded upon him. The silver-white Pride Armor breached the obstruction of vines and branches, charging forward with a light-conjured staff.

Rumble!

Upon the fireball's detonation, the fallen Father Montserrat wrested control of his body, attempting to retreat underground.

In that instant, Lumian materialized behind him, brandishing the black bone flute.

Lumian teleported into the explosion's epicenter, unconcerned about the potentially severe injuries from the formidable shockwave!

The fireball was a decoy. The true lethal strike he primed was the Symphony of Hatred!

Pfft!

Lumian thrust the black bone flute with blood-colored holes into Father Montserrat's diminishing neck.

Rumble!

The expanding flames engulfed them both.

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Chapter 611 - 611 True Name

611 True Name

Rumble!

As Lumian's body was ripped apart by the explosion, he drew upon an Ascetic's tolerance for pain and a Pyromaniac's resistance to burning, activating the black mark on his right shoulder once again.

Alongside Father Montserrat, whose neck had been pierced by the Symphony of Hatred, he vanished into the swirling flames, reappearing at the edge of the dark wilderness.

His linen shirt, black vest, and dark pants lay in tatters. The exposed parts were mangled and charred, revealing white bones in some places.

Father Montserrat, close to death, had the filthy, translucent white membrane on his body torn and burned away by the explosion. The mutated naked body with various organs below was dented and charred, with flesh and blood constantly peeling off.

Snap.

As the first piece of flesh landed on the edge of the weed-covered darkness, it suddenly seeped in, as if absorbed by the soil.

Witnessing this, Lumian's heart stirred. He grabbed Father Montserrat's body and activated teleportation once again.

They left the dark wilderness and materialized on the deck bathed in crimson moonlight.

Simultaneously, the illusory oak tree in the depths of the cargo hold shed its bark, revealing moist, slippery flesh.

The blood-filled flesh began to squirm, but only a palm-sized figure emerged.

The figure, nearly the same size as the blob of flesh that had dropped from Father Montserrat and been absorbed by the wilderness, had clear eyes and a youthful appearance, resembling Father Montserrat, who had shrunk countless times.

Father Montserrat's eyes were glazed, and his expression was rigid, showing no signs of intelligence.

The silver-white Pride Armor rushed over and swung the re-condensed light hammer down, flattening the pixie-like Father Montserrat and turning him into a bloody pulp.

Dawn lit up, melting the meat paste quickly.

The illusory colossal oak tree instantly became more transparent, and the black wilderness with weeds rapidly disintegrated.

In the blink of an eye, the abnormal scene vanished. The cargo hold returned to its original state, but many wooden boxes had shattered, and the steel walls and floor bore obvious depressions and deep marks.

Elsewhere, Lumian drew the Symphony of Hatred's black bone flute and observed as Father Montserrat's blood dripped onto the steel deck without soaking in.

Just as he breathed a sigh of relief, he heard Father Montserrat, who had fallen to the ground and entered a dying state, weakly but persistently shout, "To banish the… Child of God… you must grasp… His true name!

"His true name is…"

Suddenly, Father Montserrat's voice vanished, but his mouth continued opening and closing.

The illusory, hollow cry of a baby echoed in Lumian's ears once more.

Unlike before, the cries were distant, as if in another world. Lumian's body didn't stiffen or turn cold, rendering him immobile.

Is the invisible Child of God still wary of the Blood Emperor's aura? Is this instinctive fear? Lumian quickly surveyed the surroundings and realized that the crimson moonlight on the deck, or rather, around him, had vanished.

The area became abnormally dark, preventing even the sound of seawater splashing.

"Waa! Waa! Waa!"

The baby's cries persisted, growing louder and clearer.

Lumian abruptly lowered his head, fixing his gaze on the breathless Father Montserrat and the stomach of the corpse before him.

At some indeterminate moment, the stomach bulged, as if something writhed within. Despite the already gaping wounds, a demonic blood-red glow emanated from the belly.

Lumian's eyes narrowed slightly as he knelt on one knee. Extending his right hand, which grasped the Symphony of Hatred, towards Father Montserrat's

distended stomach.

Slash!

A gentle stroke of the black bone flute cleaved open the blood-red stomach, revealing blood-stained intestines and internal organs. There was no sign of the so-called Child of God or a moist, filthy baby.

Poof! A substantial amount of transparent, pale-yellow liquid spewed out from the ruptured blood-colored stomach, splattering the surrounding deck.

“Waa! Waa! Waa!”

The baby’s cries intensified, piercing and shrill, drawing closer to Lumian.

He seemed to be gradually overcoming His fear of the Blood Emperor’s aura out of anger and hatred.

I need to find a professional to banish this invisible Child of God… Lumian, whose current spirituality allowed him two uses of Spirit World Traversal, planned on seeking assistance.

Hunters weren’t experts in such matters!

Yet, after activating the black mark on his right shoulder, Lumian realized he couldn’t sense the spirit world or the coordinates he had once held.

The abnormal darkness induced by the Child of God’s cries appeared to seal off this area.

This was closer to Paramita!

I can’t find help, summon a messenger, or pray to high-level existences… Lumian’s eyes narrowed as his heart sank.

At that moment, the invisible Child of God’s cries drew nearer, causing Lumian’s body to stiffen and turn cold once again.

As panic surged, Lumian, a Conspirer, swiftly devised a new plan: Exorcism Spell!

One of the five ritualistic magics from Alms Monk, capable of dispelling wraiths and evil spirits.

The unborn Child of God, invisible in the real world, bore a resemblance to wraiths or evil spirits.

Lumian, untroubled by the need for a specific target in his Exorcism Spell, could firstly use his name. Secondly, he could pray to Mr. Fool. The proximity-based response of the seal on his chest, due to the severed connection with the outside world, would provide the necessary level and strength!

An Ascetic, Lumian could simplify parts of the Exorcism Spell for a quick completion.

The hitch was the requirement for the target's real name and an item frequently carried. Lumian lacked both.

His gaze shifted to Father Montserrat's open and deflated stomach, searching for something relevant.

If unsuccessful in a minute, he planned to unleash Blood Emperor Alista Tudor's aura, attempting to scare away the invisible Child of God and break through the abnormal darkness for an indirect banishment.

After scanning the area a few times, Lumian's gaze fixed on the chaotic, blood-stained intestines.

Amidst them lay a short, flesh-colored, bloodstained strip, clearly not fully developed.

Wh… An incomplete umbilical cord of the Child of God? If it's truly an umbilical cord, it's closely tied to the Child of God. Connected to His flesh and blood. I don't even need to know His true name to succeed in the Exorcism Spell… Lumian retracted the Symphony of Hatred and tore off the suspected incomplete umbilical cord.

The illusory baby's cries intensified.

Lumian shuddered and chuckled.

"Thank you for confirming it for me."

He held the incomplete umbilical cord and danced a rhythmic, distorted, primitive dance.

As Lumian danced, he constantly bent down, using the umbilical cord to draw corresponding symbols on the deck with Father Montserrat's blood.

He simplified the patterns he needed to complete, straightened his body, and pressed his left palm, creating a crimson, nearly white flame on the symbol.

Then, he placed the umbilical cord into the flames.

There was a strong symbolic meaning behind this, representing expulsion, incineration, and purification!

"Waaa!"

The baby's cries heightened, sending a shiver down Lumian's spine, causing his body to tremble slightly.

Swiftly, he positioned a lit candle atop the flame and umbilical cord. Stepping back, he recited in Hermes, “The Fool that doesn’t belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…”

As the honorific name of Mr. Fool echoed, a wispy gray fog enveloped the surroundings. The unseen baby’s cries diminished, echoing in a haunting hollowness.

Feeling a burning sensation in his left chest, Lumian advanced two steps with a determined expression. He grasped the smoldering umbilical cord, flicked it thrice, and returned it to its place.

He continued, “I beseech your assistance. I implore you to banish the object connected to this umbilical cord…”

In an instant, the crimson, nearly white, flames tainted the gray fog, burning more intensely. The umbilical cord swiftly charred, revealing Father Montserrat’s transparent face marked by explosions and blood. The hollow baby’s cries faded into the distance.

Father Montserrat’s spirit involuntarily retreated, relief evident on his pained face.

He was also connected to the umbilical cord, and he was now a ghost!

With difficulty, Father Montserrat raised his hands and shouted, “Life’s precious embrace, the harvest’s grace!

“Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!”

His transparent Spirit Body rapidly dissipated into the darkness. The invisible Child of God emitted a shrill cry filled with hatred and curses.

The cry echoed in Lumian’s head, making him feel as if he had endured Psychic Piercings repeatedly. He became extremely weak, his thoughts consumed by the pain in his soul, losing perception of the outside world.

Upon recovery, the abnormal darkness on the deck had vanished, and the crimson moonlight returned.

The symbols on the ground and the gray fog-colored flames disappeared, leaving only the quietly burning candle and the charred umbilical cord.

After a brief pause, Lumian bent down to extinguish the candle flame. Pressing his hand to his chest, he whispered, “Thank you, Mr. Fool.”

After stowing away the remnants of the umbilical cord and the ritual candle, Lumian cast a glance at Father Montserrat’s still uncharacteristic corpse. He unleashed his Compression power.

His spirituality restored, weakness eased, Lumian finally felt confident enough to return to the cargo hold. Silently, he packed the Pride Armor into his Traveler's Bag.

Completing this task, he changed into tattered clothes and tended to his exposed wounds briefly.

Enduring the pain, he returned to his suite as if nothing had occurred. Addressing the captain, Pedro, and the others, he declared, "The problem has been resolved. Father Montserrat's corpse is on the deck. His belongings will be handed over to the Church of Earth Mother. Right, a Blessed."

Lumian harbored no intention of claiming the Church of Earth Mother's items.

Captain Pedro and the others departed in bewilderment to verify the deck situation. Lugano approached Lumian and whispered,

"Is Father Montserrat really dead?"

"You can take a look at his corpse," Lumian replied with a "smile," intending to instruct the servant to provide treatment.

Lugano frowned and said, "But I vaguely heard his voice earlier. He seemed to be shouting the name of the so-called Child of God."

Shouting the so-called Child of God's name? Back then, Father Montserrat had indeed shouted the Child of God's true name, but due to special reasons, it hadn't reached the real world. Only Beyonders nearby corrupted by the Child of God could hear it? Lumian pondered and said to Lugano, "That was before Father Montserrat's death. What name did he call out?"

Lugano heaved a sigh of relief and recalled, "I think it was… I think it was…"

Finally, he remembered and recited the pronunciation.

"Yes, Omebella."

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Chapter 612 - 612 Daybreak

612 Daybreak

“Omebella.”

Termiboros’s resonant voice reverberated in Lumian’s ears as He echoed Lugano’s words.

“You’ve heard of that?” Lumian hadn’t anticipated Termiboros, who had maintained silence for a considerable time, mentioning a name that left no impression on him.

“No, I’ve never heard of it before today.” Lugano thought it was a question directed at him.

Termiboros fell silent, offering no response.

From the looks of it, it seems there is something off about the Child of God’s true name… And it sounds like a woman’s name. Considering the Villain pathway’s progression to Sequence 5 Banshee, where they transition to women, and the inherent female inclination of the Earth pathway’s Sequence 0, Earth Mother, along with the influence of the Great Mother Herself, it’s quite plausible that the Child of God is a woman. It’s a logical deduction… Lumian glanced at Lugano and smiled.

“It’s fortunate you weren’t aware of this earlier. Otherwise, you might have found yourself linked to the so-called Child of God.”

As Lumian spoke, his attention shifted to Ludwig, who had silently moved to the living room’s balcony. Lumian approached him at a measured pace, his gaze following Ludwig’s toward the deck where Captain Pedro and others were examining Father Montserrat’s lifeless form.

Lumian asked thoughtfully, “Is it edible?”

He meant whether Father Montserrat’s corpse was edible.

While Lumian had abstained from claiming the Church of Earth Mother’s possessions, including Father Montserrat’s Beyonder characteristics, he hadn’t committed to preserving the corpse intact.

In the heat of battle, it was customary for bodies to sustain damage!

Ludwig shook his head. “Not yet.”

“Very well,” Lumian sighed, retracting his gaze with a tinge of regret.

Thus, the mystery of Father Montserrat’s inexplicable connection with the invisible Child of God remained unsolved. A peculiar umbilical cord had even taken root in his stomach, leaving Lumian unable to confirm if Prinpino was a byproduct refined from Father Montserrat’s remains.

Indeed, Father Montserrat bore signs of severe corruption, though Lumian hadn’t anticipated his corruption to rival that of Mad Lady’s.

Of course, it paled in comparison to the state of the Mad Lady’s corpse; even Ludwig found it too dirty.

As for spirit channeling, Lumian understood that a spirit banished by the Exorcism Spell couldn’t be summoned for a specific duration, rendering communication impossible. Once this period lapsed, spirit channeling became futile.

Upon returning to the living room, Lumian sank into a recliner, casually unbuttoning his black vest and linen shirt. Turning to Lugano, he remarked, “Come and treat me.”

Lugano’s eyes surveyed the makeshift bandages and the oozing wounds, expressing surprise.

“It’s that serious?”

Lumian, with a hint of amusement, responded, “Do you think dealing with Father Montserrat is a walk in the park? If I hadn’t taken risks, I might have been the one lying dead.”

Lugano instinctively denied the suggestion, “Not what I meant. Why are your clothes and pants unscathed after such serious injuries?”

Lumian, enduring the pain, replied casually, “I obviously changed before coming back.”

His Traveler’s Bag proved invaluable, holding nearly a dozen identical shirts, vests, and pants, albeit varying in vest colors.

The only casualty was the golden straw hat, consumed in the explosion, now burnt to ashes.

However, this setback hardly fazed the great adventurer, Louis Berry, who had stocked up on identical replacements before leaving Port Farim.

This was the benefit of having a Traveler’s Bag. Otherwise, how could he have the space to store so many useless items with just a suitcase?

Lugano, choosing not to pry further, focused on tending to his employer’s injuries.

Originally considering a more intricate procedure, like cutting off charred skin, Lugano's plans were halted by Lumian, opting for a simpler approach.

Lumian had no intention of enduring the agony of anesthesia-free surgery, knowing that he would revert to his original state at 6 a.m.

With the pain and injuries now manageable and showing significant improvement, Lumian made his way back to his room. There, he unfolded a letter and began recounting the events involving Father Montserrat and the true name of the Child of God, diligently reporting to Madam Magician.

Lumian consistently regarded matters related to evil gods and the so-called Child of God with great gravity. He believed such concerns should be left to his superiors, acknowledging the importance of involving higher authorities.

Had Mr. K possessed a messenger, Lumian would have promptly dispatched a modified copy to inform the Aurora Order Oracle of the situation. The next course of action wasn't within the purview of an ordinary member like him or Minor Arcana; it was a concern for others to address.

Observing a shared stance between the Tarot Club and the Aurora Order in combating evil gods, especially those breaching the barrier, Lumian recognized his responsibility as both a minor Arcana card holder in the Tarot Club and an official member of the Aurora Order.

After meticulously recording the details, including Termiboros's reaction, Lumian summoned the "doll" messenger.

Engaged in a recent dispute with Ludwig and being in proximity to the other party, the "doll" messenger swiftly arrived and departed. It seldom lingered, avoiding casual conversations.

…

In a clean and refreshing bedroom of Loen Kingdom, Backlund, Madam Magician lay peacefully in bed, immersed in a restful slumber. Abruptly, she sat up, a puzzled expression crossing her face.

Spirituality warning?

Is something significant about to unfold?

Madam Magician, having just poured a glass of Sonia blood wine and not yet delved into her astromancy, was surprised to see the "doll" messenger materialize on her desk. It placed a folded letter next to a dark-red fountain pen.

Lumian's letter… Has he unearthed the issue with the Earth Mother Church's priest? I didn't guide him in vain… Madam Magician mused, letting the glass float in midair. She picked up the letter and unfolded it.

As she read, her expression underwent a sudden change, and she softly repeated the name,

“Omebella?”

The true name of the invisible Child of God is this? Was my spiritual warning connected to it?

This is something worth discussing at the Tarot Club’s regular gathering…

After a moment, Madam Magician used astromancy to indirectly verify the information. She then seated herself and observed as the dark-red fountain pen levitated. Removing the cap, she began to inscribe her thoughts on the faux goatskin: “Omebella is a name shrouded in the fog of history. It carries a potent symbolic meaning in mysticism…”

…

“Using Omebella as the Child of God’s true name. I don’t know if it’s tied to the mysteries of the Second Epoch when the ancient gods, predating the Ancient Sun God, ruled the land, or if the Great Mother is employing intense mystical symbolism to gradually erode Earth Mother’s authority and even Earth Mother Herself.

“If we can unravel the secrets of the ancient era, we might find an answer.

“The one the Aurora Order believes in might know something.”

As Lumian read the response inked on faux goatskin, he sensed a subtle suggestion from Madam Magician, hinting at him to inquire with the Aurora Order through Mr. K.

He continued reading.

“Simply put, Omebella belongs to the ancient giant race. Once known as the Goddess of Harvest during the era when ancient gods held sway. I can’t divulge more at this time. No need to delve into this matter specifically. If you come across the Earth Mother Church’s Favored, Nightstalkers, or members of the School of God’s Descent, keep a vigilant eye. We’ll handle the follow-up. Of course, when the time comes, we might assign you one or two minor missions.”

The Goddess of Harvest… indeed linked to the Earth pathway… Lumian pondered as he burned the letter with crimson flames. Returning to bed, he feigned sleep, attuned to the ship’s movements.

With the sunrise, his body swiftly healed, and the day unfolded without unexpected incidents.

Lumian returned to the living room and addressed Lugano, who had been awake for an hour, showing signs of a restless night.

“Still hearing the baby crying?”

“No,” Lugano replied, a mix of joy and uncertainty evident in his response.

Lugano believed he needed more time to observe before drawing a final conclusion.

Lumian chuckled.

“As expected, seeking Father Montserrat’s help is the only way to completely resolve your aftereffects.”

Lugano nearly choked on his words.

So, that’s why you wanted me to seek help from Father Montserrat?

Killing him is the equivalent of completely resolving the aftereffects I suffered?

Lumian approached the balcony and instructed Lugano, “Find Enio later and use a follow-up consultation as an excuse to confirm his condition.”

Right, Enio was saved by Father Montserrat’s surgery. Since there’s something wrong with Father Montserrat, he, too, might be problematic… Lugano had concerns seeking the patient, fearing potential danger. However, as he observed the sunlight gradually brightening and the horizon turning red, a sense of relief washed over him.

At 9 a.m., Lugano returned, informing Lumian that the special patient had recovered exceptionally well. There were no signs of surgery failure or hidden dangers, nor indications of corruption.

Around the same time, Captain Pedro approached Lumian, sharing news that the ship would temporarily dock to allow the Church of Earth Mother’s personnel to collect Father Montserrat’s corpse and relics and remove relevant individuals.

Notably, the adventurer and his servant were explicitly excluded from this directive by the Church of Earth Mother.

Lumian smiled, offering no response to the captain’s words. His demeanor radiated confidence and certainty.

Around noon, several combat nuns and a priest in a brown robe boarded the ship, escorting Enio and others away.

On the balcony, Lugano observed Enio being “invited” off the ship, his expression a mix of daze and fear, powerless to resist. Lugano sighed.

“If he’s fine, why capture him?”

Lumian emitted a soft chuckle.

“Do you think it’s nonexistent just because you say so? Be optimistic—after the Church of Earth Mother confirms there’s no issue, he might secure a clerical position within the Church, interacting with combat nuns daily.”

Lugano fell silent, then after a few seconds, he remarked, “But that also means losing his freedom. He’s a victim…”

“Freedom?” Lumian scoffed. “The prerequisite for freedom is not endangering others.”

Despite his stance, as he witnessed the terrified and nervous Enio and recalled the deceased Father Montserrat in his normal persona, Lumian couldn’t help but recall a peculiar phrase his sister would occasionally utter: “All living beings suffer.”

Ooo!

With a whistle, the ship prepared to set sail once again.

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Chapter 613 - 613 New Commission

613 New Commission

A few days later, Lumian lounged on a recliner on the suite's balcony, soaking in the sea breeze, reveling in the sunlight, and sipping an undiluted Manzan. From his Traveler's Bag, he retrieved the incomplete umbilical cord from Father Montserrat.

After the Exorcism Spell, the umbilical cord lost its vitality. Moreover, lacking Beyonder characteristics, it couldn't function as a mystical item or a main ingredient for charms, agents, weapons, or any other artifacts.

All it retained now was its distinct uniqueness.

In simpler terms, it mirrored the mark left on Lumian by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor. Devoid of power and incapable of emitting the fearsome aura of the Great Mother's Child of God, Lumian couldn't wield it to intimidate and temporarily intimidate a specific target.

Lumian surmised that it could only play a role in two scenarios.

Firstly, it could act as a casting ingredient, enabling specific spells to wield power beyond ordinary standards or aiding Warlocks in utilizing special spells beyond their usual repertoire.

Secondly, it could serve as a supplementary ingredient incorporated during the crafting of mystical items, charms, agents, or Beyonder weapons, imparting unique effects to the final product.

Naturally, Lumian also believed that such an umbilical cord fragment could prove valuable in the presence of the Great Mother's bestowed. For instance, even without Provocation, he could provoke intense animosity from those individuals.

Regrettably, Witches share similarities with Pyromaniacs. They are restricted to utilizing various black magic bestowed by potions, unable to delve into spell study and master new incantations like Warlocks. Among these black magics, only one, the Bloodline Curse, can be paired with an umbilical cord as a casting ingredient. However, the invisible Child of God has yet to manifest in the real world, rendering the curse ineffective against Him. Cursing the Great Mother is also off the table, as Franca and Jenna might find themselves with giving birth right there and then…

Yes, at the next meeting at the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society or any other mysticism gathering, I could aim to acquire a mystical item tied to a Warlock

Sequence, then amass potent spells that employ umbilical cords or high-level items as casting ingredients. Uh… isn't this creating several complications? In Aurore's terms, it's akin to raising a sheep for a plate of coarse salt—nurturing it only to be eventually slaughtered and roasted…

I've not needed to seek out an Artisan for crafting mystical items lately, and the absence of primary ingredients complicates matters. Alternatively, should I transform it into a Beyonder weapon with limited use?

This isn't ideal. There's a contamination risk if an insufficiently skilled Artisan incorporates it as a supplementary ingredient. It's not worthwhile enlisting the help of a high-level Artisan for what seems like a practically useless item…

What about fashioning charms and agents myself?

Lumian scrutinized the charred short umbilical cord for an extended period, grappling with indecision. Eventually, he returned it to his Traveler's Bag.

Then, Lumian reached into his pocket, where a finger from Mr. K sat.

In the past two days, he had undertaken a special "return" to Trier to brief Mr. K about Father Montserrat and the invisible Child of God. He received unreserved approval and praise from Mr. K.

The enthusiasm and fervor led Lumian to suspect that Mr. K might, in the next moment, sever his own arm and offer it to him.

His fingers seemed insufficient to convey the depth of his emotions!

Mr. K expressed great satisfaction with his decision to permit Lumian to leave Trier and pursue his adversaries. He perceived it as the Lord's revelation and commended Lumian's peculiar affinity for heretics and incidents involving evil gods, seeing him as a walking calamity for the fallen.

How could a Beyonder of such stature confine himself to Trier? It was imperative to explore various locations in the Northern and Southern Continents!

While Franca and Jenna were already acquainted with the Sowers of the Villain pathway, the connection with Father Montserrat left them feeling like they were hearing a horror story, traumatized by the bestowed of the Great Mother.

Unconsciously, he gently stroked his stomach.

After conveying his sentiments, Lumian returned to the ship contentedly, resuming his journey to the southernmost part of the Feynapotter Kingdom.

Knock, knock, knock.

Lumian had just flipped through the Dutanese textbook for a few minutes when a series of knocks echoed on the suite's wooden door.

Lugano, ever diligent, played the role of a servant, making his way to the door and peering through the peephole.

In the past few days, the absence of baby cries had eased his anxious heart.

This incident only heightened his gratitude for choosing to stay with his employer rather than returning to Trier.

Lugano believed that if the issue stemmed from the Beyonder ingredients left behind by Tanko, even if he hadn't boarded this ship, he would have encountered a similar situation sooner or later. Moreover, the wait wouldn't be long — perhaps a year or even half a year. Without the aid of a powerful Beyonder like Lumian Lee, his fate would have been quite clear.

Spotting Captain Pedro outside, Lugano turned to Lumian, who was on the balcony, and informed him, "Boss, the captain is looking for you!"

Why would the captain seek me out? Shouldn't we tacitly overlook what happened? Lumian closed the Dutanese textbook and returned to the living room, bathed in bright sunlight.

Pedro, sporting a handsome brown beard, entered the suite and exchanged pleasantries. Clearing his throat, he said, "Mr. Berry, are you interested in taking on a commission? It's a straightforward one and won't consume much of your time."

Straightforward? I doubt it would remain so after being entrusted to me… After various experiences, he gained a better understanding of his unique constitution: As a Beyonder of the Hunter pathway, harboring an evil god's angel within him and concealed remnants of the Blood Emperor's aura, he naturally attracted calamities, prematurely unveiling problems that might have remained hidden.

Lumian couldn't foresee how a supposedly simple commission would unfold.

Seated in an armchair, Lumian smiled and responded, "What commission? I'll listen to the specifics before deciding whether to accept it."

Pedro sighed, beginning to explain, "The destination of this voyage is Port Colla, my hometown. My wife and children live there.

"At the start of the year, my beloved eldest daughter, Salah, fell in love with a young man. She was passionate and eager to marry him.

"As you're aware, in Feynapotter, marriage and family are held in high regard. We must approach marriage cautiously and maintain it responsibly. Blindly rushing into the cathedral isn't our way."

"Is that lad displeasing to you and your Matriarch? Are you hiring me to silence him?" Lumian teased. "Honestly, there's no need for such trouble. A captain like you surely has plenty of ways to handle inexperienced young people. For instance,

give him an opportunity and entice him into the sea trade—only for him to never return."

Pedro chuckled dryly and responded, "I'm a law-abiding citizen. I won't resort to such measures."

A sea-faring captain with Beyonder abilities is a law-

abiding citizen? Spare me the humor… Lumian criticized, smiling at Pedro, prompting him to continue.

"I probed the young man and sensed something amiss. I hired adventurers to investigate him, but the two adventurers never returned," Pedro explained earnestly. "This raised my alarm. I don't want my child involved with such a person. It's too risky."

Lumian nodded slightly.

"Yes," Pedro admitted, forcing a smile. "To you, this may seem trivial, but it's of utmost importance to me. I'm willing to pay 20,000 gold risot as compensation. All spoils are yours."

20,000 gold risot. Being a captain seems quite lucrative… Lumian pondered for a moment and asked, "Are you a Beyonder of the Planter or Apothecary pathway?

"Are there any Beyonders from these two pathways in your family?"

What kind of question is that… Pedro was taken aback.

"No."

"Why haven't you sought help from the Church?" Lumian inquired, posing a second question.

Pedro's expression darkened. After a brief silence, he sighed and replied, "As expected of an experienced adventurer.

"I didn't approach the Church because something is off with my daughter, Salah. Her infatuation with that young man is too intense, and she rejects reason. It's as if she's possessed by a demon. Seeking the Church could resolve the issue, but it might also lead to a negative encounter and outcome for Salah."

Lumian nodded thoughtfully.

"Do you suspect that Salah has been influenced or even possessed by an unknown entity?"

"Yes," Pedro admitted, appearing worried.

Lumian asked a few more questions and took a moment to reflect before stating, "Alright, I accept this commission."

He had to consistently pursue opportunities and work towards digesting the Conspirer potion to a level where he could conduct an advancement ritual upon reaching West Balam in the Southern Continent.

Of course, saving up funds for Ludwig's meals was another motivation.

…

A few days later, at 10 p.m., in Apartment 702, 9 Rue Orosai, Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, Trier.

Franca and Jenna glanced at Anthony, who had just knocked and entered, puzzled.

"Why are you here at this time of day?"

Anthony nodded. "I've found that woman."

Huh? Jenna was momentarily surprised before questioning, "The woman who appeared in the Magic Mirror Divination?"

The woman whose presence caused the Mirror World Fragment on me to tremble slightly?

Anthony affirmed with certainty, "Yes."

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Chapter 614 - 614 Under-the-table Transaction

614 Under-the-table Transaction

Delilah Le Roy, daughter of a gem merchant, already wed with offspring—a boy and girl—indulges in opera, theater, and literature. Despite the prior incident in Quartier de la Maison d'Opéra, she persists in her activities, easily located by my informant within a week… Not one for bodyguards, she ventures out with only her lady's maid and a valet in tow…

Jenna redirected her attention, acknowledging Anthony Reid seated diagonally across from her.

"That's her."

Franca, positioned on the same side as Jenna, deliberated before speaking, "The issue at hand… Is she baiting us? If her reaction was merely surprise without understanding, we might glean little of value. Should she persist in her high-profile activities despite the resonance with the Mirror World Fragment, it's plausible that she or the person behind her seeks to draw out the Mirror World Fragment's holder."

Having assessed the scenario, Franca concluded, "Engaging with Delilah recklessly poses significant risks."

"But our Magic Mirror Divination assures the safety of today's operation," Jenna countered.

Franca smiled in response.

"Place not undue faith in divination. Moreover, the danger may not be immediate. Hastily engaging with Delilah could disrupt our future leads."

"So, we stand by? Wait a month or two until tensions ease before acting?" Jenna pondered briefly, then sat upright, revealing her plan, "I have an idea!"

"What is it?" Franca inquired, intrigued.

Jenna pursed her lips and smiled.

"Employ the mystical item—Authority Holder's Under-the-table Transaction. It grants us a discreet opportunity to interact with Delilah unnoticed.

“This way, if the issue stems from the person behind Delilah, our contact remains concealed, preserving the trail of clues. And if Delilah herself is the concern, we can swiftly transition from contact to control.”

Franca contemplated the proposal with gravity for a brief moment.

“It’s not implausible… I’m actually interested in testing the Authority Holder’s Under-the-table Transaction myself. No need to contest it. I’m a Sequence higher than you, and my self-preservation capabilities surpass yours. Even if evil entities like demons seek a trade, I can invoke Madam Judgment, a formidable Arbiter, as my witness!”

The Demoness of Pleasure appeared eager to put the mystical item to the test.

Jenna remained silent for a few seconds before consenting, “Alright.”

Anthony continued, “I’ll handle the brief encounter. Using a Hypnotist ensures no lingering clues or traces for the person behind Delilah to discover.”

“No issue.” Franca dispensed with formalities, directing her gaze at Jenna, awaiting the retrieval of the Authority Holder’s Under-the-table Transaction.

Dressed in grayish-white attire with brown leather armor, Jenna, like many female mercenaries, carried a leather brown backpack.

Franca weighed the terms of her request against the price of the Authority Holder’s Bribe powers. Rolling up the sleeve of her lady’s shirt, she reached through the membrane curtain on one side of the wooden box with a small cloth bag containing 100 Louis d’or in her right hand. Although the usage instructions didn’t explicitly exclude banknotes, Franca, drawing on her extensive mystic experience, opted for gold coins, a more universally accepted form of currency.

Suppressing a momentary surge of disgust, Franca articulated her request in Hermes.

“I desire an uninterrupted, unobserved, and highly discreet face-to-face encounter lasting over three minutes between my friend Anthony Reid, seated across from me, and Delilah, a member of the Le Roy gem merchant family in the nearby Bonnie department store.”

Franca had included meticulous qualifiers, ensuring precision in the parties meeting and the manner of their encounter to avoid any distortion.

The object with the wrinkled and wet palm-like texture lifted the cloth bag containing the gold coins and withdrew.

This signified the agreement of the Authority Holder’s Under-the-table Transaction.

Franca withdrew her right hand, using a white handkerchief to meticulously cleanse the touched area while expressing her discomfort with continuous spitting.

“Where should we position ourselves while waiting for the opportunity to meet?” Anthony inquired.

Franca stowed away her handkerchief, offering a smile.

“The request specified only two individuals: yourself and Delilah Le Roy. Consequently, your best chance is to shadow her until the opportunity arises.”

“Fair enough…”

At this juncture, Franca retrieved the resplendent Seven-Stone Bracelet from her Traveler’s Bag, extending it towards Anthony.

“In case of any complications, teleport away immediately.”

Observing the seriousness in the Demoness of Pleasure’s demeanor, Anthony swallowed his inclination to politely refuse and accepted the Seven-Stone Bracelet.

After a moment of contemplation, Franca suggested, “If you place trust in me, I can craft a Paper Figurine Substitute using your blood and hair.”

Anthony remained silent for a few seconds before agreeing, “Okay.”

…

Within the confines of the Bonnie department store, Anthony swiftly pinpointed Delilah Le Roy, exercising his keen observation skills as a Hypnotist.

Delilah stood amidst the first floor, accompanied by her lady’s maid and the valet, engrossed in a magician’s performance held by the department store to elevate the ambiance.

In the midst of the spectacle, the magician’s assistant wheeled in a substantial wooden box capable of accommodating three to four individuals. The magician, with a theatrical flourish, removed his top hat and made an announcement.

“For my next act, I require the assistance of two fortunate members of the audience.

“Madame, would you do me the honor of joining me on stage?”

The magician’s invitation was directed at Delilah Le Roy.

Though hesitant, Delilah couldn’t muster a refusal and reluctantly ascended the wooden stage prepared for the magical performance.

“This gentleman, please join us on stage as well.”

Feigning reluctance, Anthony awkwardly made his way up onto the stage.

The magician gestured toward the wooden box, instructing, “Please take a seat inside.”

Pursing her lips, Delilah sighed and, urged by the crowd, entered the wooden box.

Choosing a seat the furthest from her, Anthony, while there was still illumination, offered a smile and remarked, “Truth be told, I feel a bit embarrassed too.”

His words were delivered with a calm and genial tone, causing Delilah’s tense demeanor to ease.

Anthony continued, “Don’t believe me? Look me in the eye.”

He pointed to his eyes, inviting her gaze.

Delilah instinctively turned her gaze toward a pair of dark brown eyes reflecting her figure.

My figure… Delilah was caught off guard as her gaze seemed to descend into a spiraling depth.

In that moment, the magician closed the wooden box, enveloping it in darkness.

Seizing the opportune moment, Anthony posed a question, “Did you experience anything unusual in Quartier de la Maison d’Opéra a week ago?”

“Yes,” Delilah responded truthfully, sensing a trustworthy demeanor.

“What was that sensation?” Anthony inquired as the magician recited his rehearsed lines.

“My heart started racing, and my blood felt like it was boiling,” Delilah recounted her experience.

“Do you know what that means?” Anthony probed further.

In the darkness, Delilah shook her head.

“I’m not sure, but my real father instructed me to inform him immediately if I had similar sensations.”

“Real father?” Anthony had a hunch.

Delilah chuckled self-deprecatingly, explaining, “My real father, my mother’s lover, and the current government’s Minister of Industry, Moran Avigny.”

Moran Avigny… Sensing the magician's maneuvers with the wooden box, Anthony swiftly posed a final question. "What did he say upon learning about your reaction?"

"He told me not to worry and to continue living as usual," Delilah admitted, still harboring some concerns.

Anthony acknowledged her words succinctly.

"Lovely lady, I'm thrilled to share this magic moment with you. Can you provide me with something memorable? Perhaps a few strands of your hair."

His voice, deep and captivating, made Delilah feel that the request was entirely normal.

Consequently, she plucked a few strands of hair and handed them to Anthony.

Upon touching the hair, Anthony sighed in relief and continued in a resonant voice, "I don't want this to jeopardize your family. Once you step out of this wooden box and hear my snap, you'll forget our interaction here…"

As his compelling voice echoed, Delilah's thoughts blurred.

Smack!

The wooden box opened, revealing only Anthony. Delilah, on the other hand, had been gracefully pulled from behind the stage by the magician.

The audience erupted in excited applause.

Once the ovation died down, the magician, hand pressed to his chest, bowed in gratitude. Without casting a glance at Delilah, Anthony snapped his fingers.

Intent on engaging in conversation with the man who had established a connection with her, Delilah was jolted when she heard the snap. Her body shuddered slightly, her eyes momentarily glazed over before regaining awareness.

Turning on her heel, she descended the wooden platform, returning to her place between the lady's maid and valet.

Meanwhile, Anthony departed at a measured pace, seamlessly blending into the crowd.

…

In Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, Apartment 702, 9 Rue Orosai.

Franca applied the ashes of Delilah's hair onto the surface of the makeup mirror using black flames, reciting the familiar incantation for the Magic Mirror Divination.

Amidst the splashing water and the dark luster, Franca posed the question, “Is the owner of this hair a Mirror Person?”

The aged voice responded, “No.”

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Chapter 615 - 615 Descendants

615 Descendants

Based on Anthony's feedback, Franca had long suspected that Delilah wasn't a Mirror Person but had some connection to them. Otherwise, she wouldn't have reacted abnormally without knowing anything.

She raised the question during Magic Mirror Divination to ensure Delilah hadn't made preparations in advance or been hypnotized.

After a moment of contemplation, Franca posed her second question.

"Is the owner of this hair a descendant of the Tamara family?"

Amidst the splashing water in the dim mirror, an aged voice replied, "No."

Not a descendant of the Tamara family… Franca used the elimination method and chose a pre-prepared question.

"Is the owner of this hair a descendant of Mirror People?"

The aged voice replied in a calm and hoarse tone, "Yes."

Yes… Franca and Jenna were both shocked and delighted.

Though they had similar suspicions, confirming it stunned and terrified them.

How long had the Mirror People infiltrated Trier? Why did they have descendants in their thirties?

Moreover, they could marry, have children, and have descendants like ordinary people…

Aside from believing in the mirror's Primordial Demoness, who had a more extreme personality and naturally harbored resentment towards Her counterpart outside the mirror, what was the essential difference between them and ordinary people?

Franca and the others weren't sure if most Mirror People dissipated after death, leaving behind fragments of the mirror world, or if only a few special Mirror People like Mirror Gardner were like this.

Combined with Delilah's biological father, the current Minister of Industry, Moran Avigny, instructing her to pay attention to abnormal reactions, Franca concluded

that the high-ranking official had been replaced by a Mirror Person many years ago.

"According to the information gathered, the municipal modifications in Underground Trier, particularly the catacombs, were implemented to address the leakage of the Fourth Epoch Trier's seal. Mirror People had already replaced the originals by then, making it reasonable for them to inhabit Trier," Anthony said after some thought. "The problem now is that Mirror People can actually have descendants normally."

Jenna's eyes flickered as she interjected, "One more thing. Did a descendant of the Tamara family bring the Mirror World Fragment into the tomb in recent decades? Or was it a special Mirror Person searching for something and ended up perishing in there?

"Or could it be that before Fourth Epoch Trier sank underground or was sealed, Mirror People were already active on this land?"

Franca hissed and said, "Your latter conjecture is a little terrifying.

"Our original deduction was that the special Mirror World stemmed from the War of the Four Emperors, which caused Fourth Epoch Trier to sink. It was closely related to the Primordial Demoness's divine descent, Blood Emperor Alista Tudor's counterattack before death, and the demise of the Demoness of Catastrophe, Krismona. However, if Mirror People had appeared in Fourth Epoch Trier before all of that, the root cause of the problem would be even more mysterious and terrifying."

Franca couldn't help but gaze at the makeup mirror in her hand and address the dark mirror, "Am I a descendant of Mirror People?"

She didn't expect an answer, knowing that Magic Mirror Divination usually allowed only three questions at most. She merely voiced her thoughts and was concluding the divination.

The mirror fell silent for a few seconds before resuming, "Your ancestor had nothing to do with Trier."

Oh, does that mean I can't be related to the Mirror People? Wait a moment… Franca's surprise reverberated in her voice. Then, a sudden realization struck her. "So, you're not an emotionless answering machine. You don't have to strictly adhere to the corresponding rules."

The darkness on the mirror's surface swiftly dissipated, and the aged voice ceased.

Franca was left speechless.

Jenna drew closer to Anthony, her words a hushed murmur, "Did you catch the helplessness in that answer?"

Anthony cast a subtle glance at Franca and nodded imperceptibly.

"Hey! Don't whisper in front of me. I can hear you!" Franca complained, her Assassin's keen senses picking up their conversation.

She swiftly shifted the topic, "Fortunately, it said no. If it was a yes, it would be terrifying.

"Hmm… Your grandfather or great-grandfather shouldn't be Trieriens, right?"

"I'm not even a Trierien myself," Anthony replied.

Jenna tersely acknowledged.

"The generation of my father's and mother's grandfathers came to Trier."

Franca breathed a sigh of relief, stating, "Now, the direction of the investigation is clear. The current Minister of Industry, Moran Avigny!"

She pondered whether to conduct a covert investigation to gather crucial information or to promptly inform 007 and let the Eternal Blazing Sun Church handle it. Opting for the latter meant potential constraints due to confidentiality principles, limiting her access to the specific details she could seek from 007.

…

Ooo!

Amidst a whistle, a ship steered into Port Colla on the southernmost coastline of the Feynapotter Kingdom.

It was already mid-November, and Trier was gripped by a cold winter. Although Port Santa demanded thick clothing due to plummeting temperatures, Port Colla retained a warm climate. Passersby adorned themselves in fancy short-sleeved shirts and loose pants, exposing their ankles.

Unlike Port Santa, Port Colla lacked the tradition of carrying sabers or swords, but Lumian, drawing from her knowledge, knew that the people here were still rambunctious, with large-scale armed conflicts being commonplace.

Port Colla differed significantly from Port Santa, which thrived on pastures, plains, and mountain range mines. With limited arable land and scarce pastures, the inhabitants originally depended on the sea for their livelihood.

Over generations, the Church of Earth Mother's advancements in land development, seed cultivation, and livestock breeding transformed Port Colla. While the region achieved a level of self-sufficiency in food production, the rambunctious folk customs endured.

Nevertheless, Port Colla continued to be a major importer of food, serving as one of the primary trade hubs between the Feynapotter Kingdom and the Southern Continent. The bustling port hosted numerous foreigners and stood as a key base

for the Harvest Fleet.

Captain Pedro, standing beside Lumian, observed the lively port scene.

"It's the dry season, so the weather isn't as hot, and there's not much rain. It's the most comfortable period in Port Colla. You're welcome to visit."

These words, spoken out of courtesy, hung in the air.

Lumian, leaning against the shipboard, directed his gaze toward the distant sea, shrouded in what seemed like dark clouds.

"Is that the Berserk Sea?"

The Berserk Sea divided the Northern and Southern Continents. Only when Emperor Roselle found a safe sea route could the Northern Continent's countries cross the sea and reach the Southern Continent.

Pedro nodded, a hint of solemnity in his voice. "That's right. Without a captain and sailors familiar with those waters, a ship will undoubtedly be swallowed by the ever-changing and violent weather there. Shipwrecks occur around Port Colla every year, claiming lives."

When the majority of the passengers disembarked, Lumian guided Ludwig and Lugano to Captain Pedro's residence.

He intended to assess the situation of his eldest daughter, Salah, and her lover before deciding on his next course of action.

Carrying a suitcase and holding Ludwig's hand, Lugano trailed closely behind his employer.

It wasn't until they left the dock that he realized something startling.

His employer and the captain were conversing in Highlander!

Since departing from Port Santa, his employer and most of the ship's occupants had been using Highlander for communication.

When did he learn Highlander? How had he become proficient in it?

As Lugano observed his employer's retreating figure, he fell into a thoughtful silence, absorbing the relatively fluent Highlander being spoken.

Port Colla, 7 White Shark Street, Pedro's house.

A five-story building with a green front lawn and a charming garden in the rear, it was home to nearly thirty people under Pedro's mother's care.

Passing through the iron gates, Lumian spotted a couple strolling arm in arm on the lawn.

They were both very young. The woman, in her early twenties, possessed brown hair, brown eyes, and a naturally fair, now-tanned complexion. Although her appearance was remarkable, Lumian, accustomed to interacting with Demonesses and having a beautiful sister, deemed her merely decent.

The man, in his mid-twenties, had ordinary features, single eyelids, and curly brown hair. Clad in a white shirt and dark-gray pants, he had very average looks and demeanors that would be lost in a crowd.

"Salah, let me introduce you. This is the great adventurer, Louis Berry. His legendary experiences will soon reach Colla," Pedro joyfully introduced Lumian without a trace of gloominess.

Salah, sporting a fishnet hat to shield herself from the sun, approached with curiosity,

"What kind of legendary experiences?"

"Does earning 300,000 gold risot from a commission count?" Pedro replied, representing Lumian with a smile.

"300,000 gold risot?" Salah exclaimed.

This was a huge fortune for most people in Feynapotter.

Lumian observed the father-daughter interaction with a smile. In his peripheral vision, he detected a darkening expression on Salah's lover, a clear sign of displeasure.

Jealousy, vigilance, and worry? If there's truly something amiss with him, he should be more confident… Lumian mused, unfazed.

Pedro then introduced Salah's lover.

"Flores, Salah's fiancé. They met in Feynapotter City."

Feynapotter City, nestled in the highlands, stood as the capital of the Feynapotter Kingdom. Salah had encountered Flores there during her university studies, though Flores hailed from an ordinary family with modest educational qualifications. Having completed only elementary grammar school, he later established a grocery store near Highlander University.

"Greetings," Lumian nodded slightly, exuding the self-assured air of a great adventurer.

Following the welcoming banquet, Flores departed from Pedro's house.

He ventured into his favorite romantic bar, settling at the counter with a discontented expression.

While casually surveying the surroundings, he couldn't help but notice a woman seated two or three spots away.

Her flaxen-colored hair was elegantly tied up, and her lake-colored eyes held a crystalline glimmer. With a high nose bridge and rosy lips, even her side profile was breathtakingly beautiful.

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Chapter 616 - 616 "Love"

“Today is my lucky day to encounter such a beautiful lady. Could I be luckier to buy you a drink?”

The woman’s eyes flickered, and a smile graced her lips. She gently shook her head, indicating that his offer wasn’t accepted.

Undeterred, Flores wanted to say more, but he noticed the woman’s expression cooling off, prompting him to retreat to his seat.

In the following moments, he alternated between stealing glances at the woman’s figure, clad in a simple shirt and slender black pants, and observing the rim of her glass, watching it touched by her moist red lips.

Flores’s body heated up, and his mouth grew dry. The more beer he drank, the harder it became to quench his thirst.

Eventually, the woman finished her light-gold Manzan, placed the tall glass on the bar counter, and gracefully left amid the soothing and elegant music.

Flores hurriedly approached, pulling out a soft tissue that had gained popularity in recent years. He wiped the edge of the wine glass, where the woman’s lips had just touched.

Then, he folded the tissue, meticulously scanning the surroundings of the bar stool. He collected a few flaxen-colored long hairs, securing them in the tissue.

Completing this task, Flores became aware of the bartender and the nearly twenty male customers around him, all staring with a shared judgmental gaze: “Pervert!”

Flores wasn’t the sole victim of the woman’s enchantment—it extended to all the men and a few women in the bar. All of them had witnessed his perverted actions.

Despite the accusatory stares, Flores kept his composure and left as if nothing had transpired.

He vowed never to return to this bar again!

Yet, he harbored no regret for his actions.

On the way back to the apartment, Flores’s heart pulsed with anticipation, fueled by the promise of gains. His pace quickened, though practicality dictated a more measured speed.

Upon reaching his residence, he drew the curtains and retrieved an old notebook with a yellowed cover from his suitcase compartment.

Inside, a mottled note held a complex vocabulary that didn't belong to any language from the Northern Continent, accompanied by numerous instructions in Highlander.

Flores eagerly placed the tissue containing the woman's hair and saliva on the notebook. He then took up the mottled note, reciting the intricate and peculiar words with marked pronunciation.

"Naboredisley…"

This was the love incantation Flores had chanced upon.

With the true name, date of birth, closely related items, or bodily fluids like flesh and blood, he could insert the medium in his notebook and recite the incantation seven times, compelling the target to fall irrevocably in love.

Flores had patiently waited for the opportune moment to orchestrate Pedro's daughter, Salah, to fall and be injured. His timely aid had not only garnered gratitude but also facilitated the collection of her blood, fulfilling the conditions for the love incantation.

Reality had validated the enchanting power of the love incantation!

Flores refrained from using it again, uncertain of how to dispel its effects. If pursued by multiple women before his marriage to Salah, provoking a conflict among them could jeopardize his standing within the large family and hinder access to resources and support.

However, today was different.

She was the most captivating woman he had ever encountered. He was ready to pay any price to make her his own!

Uncertainty lingered in Flores's mind about whether the saliva-stained tissue and the naturally fallen hair could truly serve as a medium for the love incantation, but the desire to find out overwhelmed any reservations.

Excitement and anticipation surged within him as he envisioned the possibility of witnessing such a beautiful scene, an uncontrollable smile gracing his face.

"Naboredisley…"

Flores continued reciting the love incantation with abnormal devotion and enthusiasm, his heart pulsating with desire and joy.

"Naboredisley!"

After repeating it seven times, Flores watched in amazement as the tissue and hair burst into flames, reflecting a rainbow before swiftly turning to ashes.

Success… Success! Flores couldn't initially believe it, but immense joy struck his heart.

Surprise lingered, but Flores cared little.

What mattered was that it worked!

That captivating woman is now in love with me!

Thoughts of what would unfold next raced through Flores's mind. He hastily closed the notebook, clipped the note, and dashed to the door without bothering to put them away.

He yearned to walk the streets, confident that the lovely person must be seeking him!

As Flores swung the door open, there she was—the woman from the bar, standing outside.

Flores's entire being went slack under the lake-colored crystalline gaze, his balance teetering on the edge of surrender. Every fiber of his being yearned to yield.

As the woman willingly stepped into Flores's embrace, he eagerly enveloped her in his arms, leaning in for a kiss.

Yet, the sensation he encountered was far from the warmth and softness he had imagined. Instead, it was cold and unyielding.

Wh… Flores's surprise turned to shock as he realized he was embracing a waist-high mirror. The mirror brushed against his chest, swaying back and forth, resisting his attempts to disengage.

Flores recoiled in unnatural fear. The lingering sensations from his earlier fantasies refused to dissipate. His heart froze while his body burned.

With mounting dread, he struck the mirror with increasing force.

Finally, retreating to his suitcase, Flores delivered a decisive blow, shattering the mirror with a resounding crack.

It shattered into countless fragments, piercing Flores's clothes, chest, stomach, and arms.

Agony surged through Flores's body, searing his senses, snapping the fraying nerve that was already on the brink.

In that moment, he tasted a euphoria unlike any other.

Collapsing to the ground, Flores lay motionless, caught between fear, longing, anguish, and ecstasy.

…

“It can truly assist in digesting the Pleasure potion…” Franca clicked her tongue, observing the scene unfold in the mirror of the apartment diagonally opposite Flores’s room.

With her expertise, the spectacle before her could be deemed a novelty.

“I assured you I wouldn’t deceive you,” Lumian, sporting a golden straw hat, responded with a grin.

Upon accepting the commission and identifying Flores’s primary problem of inexplicably garnering the fervent affection of a stunning girl, Lumian’s initial instinct was to deploy a Demoness to test this individual.

Franca’s saliva and hair served as part of the investigation. After all, mysticism likely played a role.

Naturally, for safety precautions, Franca had treated the saliva and hair beforehand. Thus, she devised a Mirror Substitution, a dark magic of Witches, which accurately connected to them.

Now, the results were in—splendid. Franca had subjected Flores to pleasure’s torment, exposing him to the agony of chasing fleeting satisfaction.

“Curious, Flores managed to ensnare my mirror’s affection with just a single-word incantation. No ritual or supplication to any entity,” Franca mused with emotion. “Even I can’t achieve that.”

Lumian chuckled in response, remarking, “You can. No incantation or medium needed. Just unleash your charm.”

“…” Franca was taken aback. “You’re starting to resemble an Intisian. Or is this a result of your Feynapotter education?”

Pursing her lips, her gaze flickered.

Lumian continued, “There’s another issue. Pedro previously tasked two adventurers with probing Flores, but they vanished. And it appears this fellow lacks Beyonder powers.”

Franca suddenly smiled. “This is intriguing… If the Mirror Substitution failed, and I fell under the sway of that incantation, falling in love with Flores, what would you do?”

Lumian emitted a soft chuckle.

“Making someone vanish without a trace is simple. I don’t even need to lift a finger.”

Lumian was confident Ludwig could consume the fellow entirely, with counter-divination to top it off.

Without awaiting Franca’s response, Lumian headed for the door.

“I’ll pay that fellow a visit. Keep vigilant for any developments and beware of mishaps.”

“Understood,” Franca replied solemnly.

As Flores hadn’t managed to close the door in time, Lumian found the entrance accessible without the need to pry it open.

Sensing the intrusion, Flores snapped out of his daze, hastily rising to his feet.

By this point, Lumian had already picked up the notebook, unfolding it to the two pages displaying the mottled note.

“W-what are you doing?” Flores asked, horror etched across his face.

He immediately recognized Lumian.

Louis Berry? The great adventurer Louis Berry?

“Did Pedro hire you to investigate me?”

Ignoring the inquiry, Lumian walked toward the window, ushering in a gust of fresh air.

“A love incantation can make a woman fall in love with you. All you need is to obtain her true name…” Lumian began reciting the Highlander annotation on the mottled note in front of Flores. “The incantation’s pronunciation is…”

He abruptly halted without completing the recitation.

Flores’s face had already turned a sickly grayish-white, as if he could foresee the impending demise of his reputation and his capture by the Church.

“Where did this come from?” Lumian pointed at the mottled note and the old notebook.

Cold sweat broke out on Flores’s forehead, and his eyes gradually turned fierce.

Suddenly, he shouted, pronouncing the word in a rugged and awkward tone, “Naboredisley!”

This time, there was no target or corresponding medium.

Almost simultaneously, Lumian sensed his surroundings fall silent as an ominous aura rapidly enveloped the room.

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Chapter 617 - 617 Transaction

He raised his gaze, Lumian's dark hair and green eyes reflecting in his now ominous stare.

Lumian's suppressed emotions, desires, and the haze surrounding him erupted like a volcano.

This was a force even an Ascetic's endurance couldn't withstand.

Crack!

Lumian's body cracked, shrinking into a palm-sized mirror.

The mirror shattered completely, fragments scattering across the ground.

In the room diagonally opposite, Lumian materialized beside Franca, wearing a solemn expression.

Had he not prepared Mirror Substitution beforehand, he might have endured a double explosion of emotions and desires. It resembled the same outcome when evil god bestowed heard the Symphony of Hatred's different melodies.

Of course, if Franca hadn't been lurking nearby, if he hadn't readied Mirror Substitution, he wouldn't have used himself as bait to "converse" with Flores.

Lumian seized Franca's shoulder, his voice deep as he uttered, "Let's leave this place first."

He promptly activated the black mark on his right shoulder, in an attempt to teleport away.

Confronted with an adversary capable of exploiting his weaknesses and latent dangers, Lumian's initial response was to switch to support, utilizing his corresponding abilities from a distance. Franca would assume the role of the main attacker. However, considering Franca, a Demoness of Pleasure, hadn't indulged herself for a long time, he feared she might not resist the explosion of desire. It seemed prudent to retreat, regroup with others, and return later.

At that moment, a voice alternating between masculinity and femininity echoed in Lumian and Franca's ears.

"There's no rush to escape. I've changed my mind. I want to make a deal with you."

A deal? Something jolted in Lumian's and Franca's minds. After some thought, they chose to stay put.

Simultaneously, Lumian sank his consciousness into his right hand, ready to activate the remnant aura of Blood Emperor Alista Tudor.

This wasn't meant to intimidate Flores, but if his emotions and desires were triggered again, Lumian could "alert the police" in time!

Being one of the Feynapotter Kingdom's primary ports for trade with the Southern Continent and a key base for the Harvest Fleet, Port Colla undoubtedly housed at least one Grade 1 Sealed Artifact even without a demigod.

Franca gazed at the wall and the air in front of her, questioning, "What deal?"

Flores, dressed in a floral shirt, casually pushed open the unlatched door of the apartment and spoke in a deep, cold, and dignified manner,

"Let me introduce myself. Naboredisley, a Demon."

A Demon? A genuine Demon… The cost of using the Authority Holder's Under-the-table Transaction actually materialized here–to make a deal with a Demon… However, Lumian's acceptance of the captain's mission and our pursuit of Delilah are distinct matters. If we had opted to patiently wait a month or two before engaging with Delilah instead of utilizing the Authority Holder's Under-the-table Transaction, what would have transpired today? Could there have been a so-called deal? Franca smiled in surprise, suspicion, and confusion.

"How can you reveal yourself as a Demon?

"Shouldn't a true Demon conceal their identity to lower our guard?"

The Demon, identifying himself as Naboredisley, clenched his right fist and pressed it against his lips. He smiled and replied, "A true Demon is both Demon in body and mind. I'll inform you that you're dealing with a Demon, but refusal isn't an option. I won't obscure my identity to achieve my goals like the foolish ones.

"For instance, this man named Flores is well aware of the consequences of repeatedly reciting my true name through the notebook. Heh heh, back then, that foolish Warlock labeled it the Love Incantation, but he still couldn't resist the temptation and couldn't control himself. Haha, for Demons, this gradually decaying soul that slowly descends into the Abyss is the most delectable feast. The sensation of resistance and constant decay is as unforgettable as the finest wine."

Lumian and Franca didn't disdain or ridicule Naboredisley's unabashed and alluring depravity.

Since a Demon had spoken, there had to be a deeper motive!

Moreover, Lumian couldn't be certain if Naboredisley was a genuine Demon or a self-proclaimed one. He couldn't verify if Naboredisley was his actual name or if he had a different origin.

Although the activation of desire aligned with the traits of a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle of the Demon pathway, it wasn't exclusive to Demons. Lumian's Symphony of Hatred could achieve a similar effect.

Franca grinned at the Demon's incessant narrative and remarked, "That foolish Warlock probably assumed your true name as a Love Incantation because of your cues. Is that really your true name?"

"That's why he's foolish," Naboredisley replied with a faint smile.

Lumian wasn't eager to rush into the transaction. Instead, he inquired, "How did you manage to convince Flores that the Love Incantation actually works?"

Naboredisley casually glanced back at Flores's rented apartment and assumed a relaxed posture.

"He tried some other incantations from the notebook, and some of them worked."

"He's just an ordinary person, yet he can cast an incantation like a Warlock?" Franca expressed disbelief.

Naboredisley grinned.

"I've heard a very reasonable saying: 'All things possess godhood.'

"No matter how ordinary a person is, as long as they're willing to pay the corresponding price, they can create Beyonder effects."

All things possess godhood… Mr. K often says this when preaching… Lumian observed Naboredisley, the self-

proclaimed Demon.

Franca seized the opportunity to ask, "What price did Flores pay?"

Naboredisley smiled meaningfully. "I already told you."

The part where the soul gradually decays and falls into the Abyss? Franca nodded thoughtfully.

Lumian suddenly grinned.

"If he hadn't paid the price, how could you communicate with us so easily using his body?"

Naboredisley smiled back but remained silent.

Lumian shifted the topic.

“Did you have a hand in the deaths of those two adventurers who were investigating Flores?”

“Consider it a bit of interest,” Naboredisley replied, glancing around. He smiled and pulled a chair over, casually remarking, “You lack the necessary courtesy.”

“Because we never considered making a deal with you,” Franca deliberately stated. “I won’t make a deal with a Demon.”

Naboredisley chuckled and said, “Although it’s amusing for a Demoness to claim she won’t trade with a Demon, I can assure you that I won’t force you into a deal. I won’t even hinder you from informing the Church of Earth Mother about Flores later.

“I differ from my inept peers. I prefer transparent trade, avoiding the convoluted legalese of contracts where terms and conditions are twisted. I’ll make you choose to trade with me, even knowing the content and price.”

“I decline,” Franca replied with a smile. “I refuse to entertain your deal.”

Naboredisley narrowed his eyes dangerously but maintained his usual amiable demeanor.

“You can listen first before deciding if you want to accept this deal.

“I won’t boast that I can fulfill any of your wishes, but I can help you fulfill most of them. This is a promise from an ancient Demon.”

“Ancient?” Lumian looked curious. “Have you heard of the Ancient Sun God?”

Naboredisley’s expression darkened subtly.

“I’m aware.”

“Can you tell me about Him? The deity I believe in now seems to be the resurrected Him.” Lumian’s lips curled up, revealing two rows of pearly-white teeth. “This can be used as compensation for the transaction, but it has to be paid first before we fulfill the contract. Don’t think of fabricating it. That would be blasphemy to my Lord.”

Naboredisley fell silent. After a few seconds, he smiled and said, “As I mentioned earlier, I can’t accomplish certain things and fulfill certain wishes. This is one of them.”

When one’s humble enough, it’s really difficult to win a war of words… Lumian sighed inwardly and turned to Franca, silently inquiring if she wanted to seize this opportunity to the-table Transaction.

Franca hesitated for a moment before addressing Naboredisley. “Tell me about the deal first before I decide.”

Naboredisley chuckled.

“A wise decision. I hope you can help me kill another Demon’s descendant. He resides somewhere in the Berserk Sea. Don’t worry, Demon descendants are cold, cruel, and bloodthirsty. He definitely meets the death penalty standard in your hearts.”

“Then why don’t you do it yourself?” Franca clicked her tongue. “You seem quite powerful.”

Is it because you’re sealed? Or could it be that he can’t leave the Abyss and can only project himself onto a human like now, unable to maintain it for long?

Naboredisley replied calmly, “Any abnormal movements from me will attract the attention of the other Demon. The reward for this transaction is that I fulfill one of your wishes. It’s a predetermined wish that I can fulfill.”

“Can you help us digest the potion in our bodies?” Lumian probed.

Naboredisley shook his head.

“I won’t lie to you. I can’t do it. The digestion of the potion is a personal matter.

“Of course, I can create conditions and opportunities to indirectly help you digest the potion as soon as possible, but whether you can seize those opportunities depends on yourselves.”

Quite honest… Franca muttered silently.

Suddenly, she revealed a bright smile.

“This deal tempts me, but I need a reliable and powerful witness.”

Author’s Note: The inspiration for the love incantation in the previous chapter originated from the real world. I believe I’ve shared it on my public WeChat account before—Aphrodite’s hidden name is Nepherieri, meaning “beautiful eyes.” Repeating this incantation can win a woman’s love. When I read about this, I found it a little sinister. I mainly changed the pronunciation.

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Chapter 618 - 618 Divination Ritual

618 Divination Ritual

Franca's request met with a gentle shake of Naboredisley's head.

"You can request the deity you believe in to bear witness when signing the contract, but I don't want anyone else present."

A chuckle escaped Naboredisley's lips.

"I'm a Demon. I need to be careful to avoid becoming prey."

We can recite a god's name as a witness when signing the contract? The temptation loomed over them both.

For ordinary Beyonders who held faith in the Eternal Blazing Sun or the God of Steam and Machinery, invoking a deity's name as a witness might offer no more than psychological comfort. True gods rarely intervened in such trivial affairs of ordinary Beyonders without a proper ritual.

Yet, as Minor Arcana card holders of the Tarot Club, Lumian and Franca followed the great existence, Mr. Fool. Simply invoking his name could draw attention, a fact not lost on them.

Franca's heart raced with uncertainty. Should she strike a deal with the Demon under the watchful gaze of Mr. Fool, in exchange for elusive benefits?

Naboredisley reiterated his stance.

"This is a fair transaction. There's no coercion. It's the same for you and me. If you insist that there must be a powerful witness present, I choose to give up."

Just as Lumian contemplated the idea, Termiboros's resounding voice echoed within his mind, "It's best if you don't agree. Don't even make a false promise."

Lumian found himself taken aback as Termiboros, an Angel of Inevitability, unexpectedly warned him about the unfolding situation.

Alarmed, Lumian pushed aside thoughts of Termiboros's possible intentions, choosing instead to focus on scrutinizing Naboredisley's every move and assessing his own mental state.

The more Lumian delved into the matter, the more alarmed he became. Initially planning to teleport away immediately and seek help, he and Franca had gradually

shifted their stance, considering Naboredisley's propositions and exploring potential exploitations. Their plan had evolved from seeking the presence of a powerful Arbiter like Madam Judgment as a witness to contemplating a deal without one. Now, all they hoped was to ensure their safety by invoking a god's name.

Compromising one step at a time, changing bit by bit… This is very similar to Naboredisley's description of degenerating bit by bit, slowly rotting one's soul before ultimately plunging into the Abyss… It also said that Demons aren't just about the body but also about the mind… Lumian swiftly snapped out of his reverie, sensing a possible influence from Naboredisley on both himself and Franca. It resembled the signs of a Spectator's presence. Similarly, he could glean insights through Anthony's self-examination technique.

Even in this state, Franca displayed remarkable control over her emotions. She turned to Lumian, seeking agreement. With thoughts racing, the corners of Lumian's mouth curled up slightly as he addressed Naboredisley.

"We don't require a witness, but I need to confirm something first."

"What is it?" Naboredisley's demeanor remained cold, yet his attitude was composed.

Lumian nodded at Franca, conveying that he would handle the situation.

Franca, in turn, silently acknowledged her understanding.

Turning back to Naboredisley, Lumian stated, "I need to verify that the name you're using now, the name you'll use in the contract later, is indeed your real name."

Deliberately avoiding the term "Naboredisley," Lumian exercised caution to mitigate potential risks.

Naboredisley pondered for a moment before responding, "Sure. As a Demon, I don't just dislike but also admire your caution."

Lumian maintained his smirk.

"The way to confirm is Magic Mirror Divination, a complete one. We'll set up a ritual and seek answers from a hidden entity. As you know, my friend is a Demoness. She's quite skilled at this."

Lumian pointed at Franca as he spoke.

Indeed… we should confirm if Naboredisley is the Demon's real name. Otherwise, the deal would be a joke… Franca suddenly became alert, realizing she had been too eager to conclude the deal and had overlooked many potentially problematic details.

Naboredisley pondered for a moment before agreeing, “Alright, but I have to observe from within the wall of spirituality where the ritual takes place.

“This is a Demon’s caution. We’re worried that you’ll use Magic Mirror Divination to inform certain Demons’ natural enemies.”

“No problem,” Lumian said with a bright smile. “To complete Magic Mirror Divination, I want you to write your real name on this note and bring over the ancient notebook from the opposite room. Together, they can act as a medium for divination.”

Naboredisley, well-versed in the intricacies of complete Magic Mirror Divination, responded with a smile, “No problem.”

He stood up, taking the note from Lumian’s hand. Using Flores’s fountain pen, he inscribed a complex word with the pronunciation “Naboredisley,” its language unknown.

The self-proclaimed Demon then left for Flores’s rented apartment, retrieving the ancient notebook and the note.

Lumian had already arranged a simple ritual, placing three candles and a mirror on an empty table.

Before Naboredisley returned, Franca approached him and whispered, “The usual Magic Mirror Divination target?”

Lumian shook his head, indicating they weren’t. Softly uttering a single word, he said, “Him.”

A pure male pronoun.

Franca’s pupils dilated as she tacitly understood whom Lumian was referring to.

The implications were self-evident!

After Naboredisley handed her the ancient notebook, Franca smiled happily and said, “Demons are likely higher-level godhood creatures. I can’t afford to be negligent. I plan to seek answers from a more special entity. Inevitably, my companion will need to assist me during the ritual. I hope you can understand what you’ll see next. If you’re unwilling, we’ll abandon this transaction.”

She didn’t make it sound too firm, making the “abandon the transaction” option seem more like a negotiating strategy.

Naboredisley smiled and replied, “No problem. I’ve seen too many special rituals.”

His implication was clear—if there was a problem with your ritual, I would be able to tell immediately.

Franca sanctified the ritual silver dagger and created a wall of spirituality. Lumian placed the ancient notebook and the note with the real name in front of the lit candle and mirror, using a small amount of Gardner Martin's spiritual blood to draw a few complicated and strange symbols.

Observing from a distance, Naboredisley muttered, "Seeking guidance from fate… Questioning an entity in this domain?"

Lumian seized the opportunity to turn around and ask, "What can I do to dispel Salah's infatuation with Flores?"

Naboredisley smiled meaningfully and said, "Either they both perish, or they seek my approval."

With the preparations complete, Franca stepped back, gazing at the three burning candles and the palm-sized makeup mirror. She recited an honorific name in ancient Hermes.

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era…"

Upon hearing this, Naboredisley's expression changed.

His face turned icy, and his eyes revealed a chilling cruelty.

Just as he was about to project Lumian and Franca's figures in his eyes and ignite their desires and emotions, he realized that a thin gray fog emanated, making the two targets indistinct and challenging to lock onto.

Lumian gripped Franca's forearm.

In mysticism, this signified that the two people in the ritual were one.

Of course, the prerequisite was that the original ritual host didn't resist.

Lumian took over the ritual host's position and recited the last two paragraphs.

"The mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…"

The thick gray fog surged even more visibly, and Naboredisley, manipulating Flores's body, grew increasingly malevolent.

He tried to break free from the altar, attempting to shatter the wall of spirituality, but the gray fog stood as an impenetrable obstacle.

Lumian advanced two steps, presenting the note with the real name to the candle symbolizing the ritual's host. He ignited it and flicked it three times, dispersing ashes onto the ancient notebook.

After these preparations, Lumian spoke in a deep voice, “I beseech your assistance. I implore you to banish the creature named Naboredisley…”

Naboredisley, in control of Flores’s body, opened his mouth, emitting a sharp cry.

Simultaneously, filth, depravity, and evil ravings echoed in Lumian and Franca’s ears. Each word seemed to assault their minds, causing their bodies to contort and their souls to decay.

Yet, under the ritual’s shield and the layers of gray fog, the words appeared distant, as if emanating from the horizon. Even if Lumian and Franca strained to listen, the specifics eluded them.

Amidst a faint shriek, pitch-black gas emanated from Flores’s body, swiftly dissipating.

Faces emerged from the pitch-black gas, mouths opening and closing, cursing Lumian and Franca vehemently, only to dissolve into the gray fog.

In a matter of seconds, the pitch-black gas completely vanished, and Flores’s demeanor and aura returned to normal.

Exorcism Spell!

In just a few days, Lumian had employed the Exorcism Spell once more!

From his perspective, Naboredisley, hiding his true form somewhere, had stealthily infiltrated Flores’s breath for control. He was akin to a Wraith evil spirit possessing another.

Most surprising was the effectiveness of the name Naboredisley!

Of course, if this wasn’t the true name, if the Exorcism Spell proved futile, Lumian could resort to Mr. Fool’s complete honorific name to intimidate the Demon and drive it away with the gray fog and the gaze of a great existence.

This time, it wasn’t Mr. Fool’s seal on his chest that answered, but the great existence himself!

Lumian forced a smile and said to Franca, “This fellow is less formidable than the invisible Child of God of the Great Mother.”

Despite Naboredisley’s frenzied curse affecting his desires and emotions, requiring him to endure with his Ascetic powers, it still paled in comparison to the invisible Child of God’s ability to partially breach the gray fog’s protection of the ritual host, repeatedly creating a Psychic Piercing effect.

Franca remained silent, her gaze fixed on the makeup mirror serving as decoration.

In the mirror, a faint fog permeated the air, and a vague figure approached from a distance.

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Chapter 619 - 619 Chronicles

619 Chronicles

Franca strained her eyes, attempting to discern the figure amidst the dimly lit surroundings. The tall buildings loomed mysteriously, their outlines blending with the fog, reminiscent of stars reflecting on a foggy night.

Wh… Franca's pupils dilated, and her eyes widened in astonishment.

Her heart, previously gripped by the effects of Naboredisley's frenzied curse, now surged with shock.

Instinctively, she focused all her might on the figure, trying to pierce through the layers of gray fog and unravel its face and clothing. However, the thin fog grew hazier, dissipating along with the fleeting images it carried.

In just three to four seconds, the mirror on the altar reverted to its normal state.

"What's wrong?" Lumian turned to Flores, who lingered in the residual gray fog, seeking an update on Franca's condition.

Franca, still captivated by the mirror, fell silent for a moment before speaking.

"Did you see the scene reflected in the mirror?"

"I did." Lumian reflected briefly and suggested, "Perhaps it signifies Mr. Fool's divine kingdom."

Their prayers for the Exorcism Spell had been directed towards Mr. Fool. Therefore, the mirror used to deceive Naboredisley while being ineffective in actuality was likely related to Mr. Fool.

Franca stammered, "B-but the backdrop resembles the city before your sister and I transmigrated. It's like those foggy times—every building morphing into colossal creatures nestled in the fog, adorned with countless glowing eyes."

Lumian, understanding Franca's emotions, showed no surprise at the familiar street scenes.

Reminding his companion, he said, "Don't forget about the Celestial Worthy. He has a close connection to your homeland, and he and Mr. Fool have been engaged in a dream battle. It's quite conceivable that such dreamscapes can manifest in reality through rituals."

Franca fell into a momentary silence before releasing a sigh.

“You’re right…”

She followed with a self-deprecating laugh.

“I got worked up for nothing.”

Lumian mitigated the negative effects from Naboredisley and methodically extinguished the candle flames, concluding the ritual.

As Franca dispelled the wall of spirituality and the wind howled, clearing away the lingering gray fog, Flores seemed to snap back to reality, no longer lost in the confusion of searching for an exit.

However, upon seeing Lumian and Franca, his face turned an even more pallid shade.

Instinctively, he lowered his head and observed a black, almost ethereal, filthy liquid oozing from his body. Highly corrosive, it swiftly dissolved his blood, flesh, and bones.

“Save me!

“Save me!”

Flores unleashed a blood-curdling scream, repeatedly calling for help. Lumian, however, observed with interest, as though studying the toll exacted on those who made a deal with Demons.

In less than ten seconds, Flores’s body succumbed to corrosion, collapsing with a resounding crash, immersed in the almost illusory black liquid.

Flores’s head continued to wail, his voice gradually fading.

After a while, he breathed his last with wide-open eyes.

His relatively intact head swiftly disintegrated into the filthy liquid.

The once-illusory liquid lost its evil, mystical aura, revealing the remains of the corpse, now filled with a foul, noxious mud-like substance.

“Dealing with Demons doesn’t end well..” Franca sighed, reflecting on her earlier temptation.

Her laughter echoed hollowly as she continued, “Thankfully, we didn’t strike a deal with that self-proclaimed ancient Demon. Still, I missed an opportunity to eliminate the latent threat of using the Authority Holder’s Under-the-table Transaction.”

Lumian chuckled and remarked, “Consider this carefully.

“I remember Madam Magician’s usage instructions, emphasizing the possibility of encountering transactions with evil entities like Demons.

“Recall, it was about encountering a transaction, not completing one.

“You’ve faced it; you simply chose not to accept it. That fellow didn’t force you either.”

Franca contemplated the situation and admitted, “You make a point. It does seem that way…”

She clicked her tongue and glanced at Lumian.

“If you had chosen the Lawyer path, you might be equally promising…

“In reality, I believe that’s the norm. The Authority Holder’s Under-the-table Transaction is, at most, equivalent to a Sequence 5. Every use means one less opportunity. How could the negative effects be a transaction with a Demon? From what I know, Demon is a High Sequence term within the Criminal path. What does it signify? It represents a demigod!

“Yes, it’s merely encountering a transaction, not completing it. There’s room for negotiation. Yet, it’s also highly dangerous. Demons and other evil entities aren’t known for their philanthropy. If we refuse to trade with them, why would they spare us indefinitely? Furthermore, predicting when we’ll encounter them is impossible, making it challenging to prepare in advance.”

Lumian smiled.

“If you can’t predict it, try approaching it differently. After using the Authority Holder’s Under-the-table Transaction, immediately prepare and take the initiative to create an opportunity to negotiate with Demons and other evil creatures. Set the pace and manage the risks. For instance, ‘invite’ Demons to Saint Vième Cathedral for a deal.”

The Eternal Blazing Sun Church’s main cathedral in Trier, Saint Vième Cathedral!

Franca chuckled.

Franca suddenly halted.

Saint Vième Cathedral might not be suitable, but they did have a few hidden locations with a similar atmosphere. It wasn’t entirely impossible.

For example, the sacrificial square on the third level of the catacombs, Krismona Night Pillar…

“That’s an interesting idea,” Franca commended Lumian. “In the past, when facing the negative effects of mystical items, we always endured and waited passively. Taking the initiative is a different approach. Hunters indeed have their own unique styles.”

Taking the initiative involved making preparations in advance and minimizing potential dangers.

Of course, taking the initiative didn’t necessarily mean triggering the effects, but it required considering such possibilities.

Lumian glanced out the window.

“Flores’s scream has likely attracted the attention of the nearby residents. Someone may have called the police. Let’s vacate this place before examining the contents of this notebook.”

He gathered the ancient notebook, candles, and other items from the dining table as he spoke.

“Agreed.” Franca surveyed the room, and dark flames silently ignited in various spots.

As the flames flickered, Lumian teleported Franca away, returning to the guest room of Captain Pedro’s five-story house.

“Go through the notebook and check if there’s a way to dispel the love incantation. I’ll verify Salah’s condition and inform Pedro about Flores’s situation and outcome. He can handle the Church of Earth Mother and liaise with the local police.” Lumian handed the ancient notebook to Franca before opening the door and stepping into the corridor.

Franca settled into the recliner and opened the notebook.

Suddenly, she murmured to herself, Something feels off. Knowing Lumian’s approach, shouldn’t he have immediately perused the notebook after the ritual, searching for a solution to dispel the love incantation? Why did he hastily leave the moment the police were mentioned after discussing matters with me extensively?

He should be aware of the critical issue…

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Franca suddenly came to a moment of realization.

Naboredisley’s chilling rants and wild curses had a disturbing impact on Lumian, stirring up his desires and emotions. Despite his attempts to endure the onslaught using his Ascetic powers, subtle signs of struggle manifested.

Franca’s eyes darted around, a sly chuckle escaping her lips.

…

Lumian found Pedro in the small living room on the first floor.

Before he could delve into Flores's situation, the captain exclaimed in surprise,

"Mr. Berry, Salah came to me a few minutes ago. She was crying in fear and pain, saying she dreamt of falling in love with Flores and couldn't wake up. However, she suddenly woke up tonight, feeling like it was a nightmare, and she wishes to annul the engagement.

"May I know how you did it?"

Pedro spoke with a touch of unconscious politeness.

She's back to normal? Could it be because Flores is dead? No, more likely Naboredisley's expulsion through the Exorcism Spell has restored those affected by the devil to normal… Lumian guessed, smiling.

"Flores is already dead."

"Did you kill him?" Pedro, showing no aversion to the idea of killing, was even more intrigued by the fact that Flores's death seemed to have awakened his daughter.

"A Demon killed him." Lumian briefly recounted the events, avoiding mentioning Naboredisley by name. Instead, he handed Pedro the love incantation note tucked into an ancient notebook for a closer look.

Finally, he said, "You handle the rest. It's advisable to keep Salah in a cathedral or cloister for the next month or two. I'm uncertain if the Demon will revisit the former victim once he recovers."

"Understood." Pedro clenched his teeth, his expression somber.

After receiving the 20,000 gold risot bounty, Lumian returned to his guest room.

Franca, holding the ancient notebook, frowned as she said, "This doesn't seem like the notebook of an evil Warlock. It's more like a collection of a novelty hunter's chronicles. It contains various legends of Devils and Demons from the Northern and Southern Continents spanning the past thousand years. The last record appears to be over a hundred years ago.

"Mmm… There are peculiar incantations scattered within, as if fabricated.

"One of them mentions a legend of a Demon on Hanth Island in the Berserk Sea."

Lumian grasped Franca's concern.

Naboredisley had mentioned that the Demon descendant he sought to eliminate resided somewhere in the Berserk Sea!

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Chapter 620 - 620 Abnormality in the Abyss

620 Abnormality in the Abyss

“Could it be that some of the Demon legends in this notebook are true?” Lumian held the yellowed notebook and flipped through a few pages.

“Perhaps,” Lumian smiled. “Let’s not speculate about such matters involving high-level creatures. I’ll just write to Madam Magician and report it to her.”

Franca glanced at Lumian and chuckled.

“You’re really proficient in dealing with management.

“However, it does make sense. We know very little about real Demons. Making wild guesses is a waste of time.”

She then pointed at the notebook and said, “The handwriting differs from the note that wrote the Love Incantation. It’s not the same author.”

Lumian had already sat at his desk, unfolded a piece of paper, and wrote to Madam Magician. As he deliberated over his words, he responded to Franca’s words, “Does the notebook have the phrase that represents the Love Incantation?”

“I scanned through it. Nothing,” Franca replied affirmatively.

Lumian contemplated for a moment and said, “There are two possibilities. The first is that the Demon used someone under its control to insert the Love Incantation into this notebook that records Devil and Demon legends, hoping that it could secretly spread and affect more people. The second possibility is that those who once read this notebook were unknowingly influenced by the demon and obtained a so-called revelation. They wrote this Love Incantation and provided commentary.”

“Mysticism sure is dangerous…” Franca sighed with emotion.

Lumian swiftly composed the letter and dispatched the ancient notebook and the note with the Love Incantation to Madam Magician.

While awaiting a response, Franca and Lumian briefly delved into the Demon legend of Hanth Island in the Berserk Sea.

Thirty years after Emperor Roselle discovered a safe sea route to the Southern Continent, numerous mysterious deaths of colonists and natives plagued the newly colonized Hanth Island. Witnesses claimed to have seen a valley ablaze with sulfur flames in the island's forest. At night, pitch-black Demons with goat horns were suspected of circling the area.

After the authorities intervened, the mysterious deaths ceased. The owner of the notebook that chronicled the legend even attempted to explore the forest, but he failed to locate the alleged valley burning with sulfur flames.

As they conversed, time passed. The doll messenger arrived with Madam Magician's reply, the ancient notebook, and the Love Incantation note.

Lumian illuminated the gas wall lamp and began reading. Franca didn't hesitate and leaned in.

"It's impossible to determine its true name with just the fact that the name 'Naboredisley' could expel that fellow.

"This is because it admitted, in a short period of time, that it was its real name. Even if it's lying, sometimes, under certain circumstances, admitting something makes it the truth. It possesses the corresponding mysticism connection. This is one of Mr. Fool's authorities. Amon, too, could do it in the past.

"As you prayed directly to Mr. Fool and used his power to exorcize Naboredisley, it doesn't matter if it's its real name. It won't affect the final outcome.

"Do you understand? Termiboros's warning was correct. You have to be cautious even if it's a false promise.

Upon reading this, Lumian turned to Franca.

Franca said with a solemn expression, "Emperor Roselle once found the entrance to the Abyss and conducted a thorough exploration."

"As expected of Emperor Roselle," Lumian praised instinctively and sincerely.

There weren't many people he admired—in fact, very few—but Emperor Roselle was one of them.

Knowing that this emperor was a transmigrator like his sister made him feel an affinity with him.

Franca continued, "In the Abyss that Emperor Roselle explored, Devils and Demons had long perished. Not a single one remained.

"All he saw before him were either corpses or silence.

"This state made him feel fear. He left in a hurry without completing his exploration."

“All dead?” Lumian frowned slightly. “Is the Love Incantation fellow either not a Demon or an ancient Demon from the Abyss’s core?”

Pausing momentarily, he added, “If it’s really an ancient Demon, it might know why the Abyss underwent such an abnormality.”

Franca nodded solemnly.

The duo cast their gazes at the back of Madam Magician’s reply.

“I reckon you’ve already grasped the gist of the Abyss from the Two of Cups, so I won’t dive deeper. Simply put, Naboredisley could be a potent Demon who slipped out of the Abyss’s anomaly, or it might have roamed the Northern Continent before the three major Devil clans—Nois, Beria, and Andariel—held sway. It didn’t pledge allegiance to any ancient gods, whichever way you slice it. But dealing with an ancient Devil King who’s fled back to the Abyss isn’t something the two of you are capable of, let alone striking a bargain with it.

“You can explore the Demon legends on Hanth Island if it’s on your route, but stay cautious.

“Remember, the Abyss’s corruption is potent. It can corrupt people without their awareness. During this time, be vigilant for changes in your thoughts, concepts, emotions, and desires. If you notice anything unusual, consult a Psychiatrist for confirmation. If you’re genuinely affected by the Abyss aura from Naboredisley, contact me or Judgment. Experts skilled in purifying such influences will assist you. Avoid burdening Mr. Fool unnecessarily.

“Thinking about the name ‘Naboredisley’ is okay, but refrain from writing or reading it.”

After reading the letter, Lumian mumbled to himself, “Madam Magician seems more inclined to believe it’s a Demon and not some other hidden entity.”

“That’s right,” Franca echoed, puzzled. “Let’s assume that fellow is a Demon, yet it doesn’t even have Danger Premonition, allowing us to complete the preparations for the Exorcism Spell. If we say it isn’t, it can create fluctuations and trigger our desires and emotions. I was just guessing that it’s a secret entity that possesses a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact of the Demon pathway.”

Lumian pondered for a few seconds and said, “Perhaps Madam Magician has seen more.

“That fellow probably doesn’t have Danger Premonition because its true form isn’t here. It only descended with a sliver of its aura and power. Or perhaps, the danger originated from Mr. Fool, so it couldn’t sense it!”

“That makes sense,” Franca agreed before saying with a strange expression, “Ever since we became Minor Arcana cards, we’ve increasingly come into contact with the depths of the mystic world. The Demoness Sect, the mirror world, the War of

the Four Emperors, the Great Mother, and a Demon of the Abyss this time… In the past, when I read Emperor Roselle's diary, I often had the feeling that 'that's just how the world is.' But now, the contents of his diary have truly come to us."

Without waiting for Lumian to speak, Franca added in a self-

deprecating manner, "For example, a Demoness does taste pretty good."

Lumian chuckled and remarked, "Think about it carefully. Did you encounter these things after becoming a Minor Arcana card holder, or after getting to know me?"

…

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Two days later, Lumian, Ludwig, and Lugano boarded a long-

distance ship set to pass by Hanth Island, en route to the Southern Continent's West Balam.

Lumian aimed to investigate the Demon's legend and seize an opportunity to fully digest the Conspirer potion.

After outsmarting Naboredisley and banishing it with the Exorcism Spell, Lumian realized that his potion digestion had made significant progress.

With another decent performance, he could advance the digestion further. This would eliminate the need for the final advancement ritual's aid, allowing him to plan the subsequent matters more calmly.

Captain Pedro, accompanied by his eldest daughter Salah, and a few Favored and Blessed, expressed sincere gratitude to Lumian. They watched as he ascended the gangway with his godson and servant, boarding the ship named 'Berries.'

Once the ship set sail, one of the Blessed appeared to sigh in relief and commented, "He's finally left Port Colla…"

Without waiting for Salah to inquire about the reason for the sigh, the Blessed, wearing a brown priest's robe, turned to her and Pedro and advised,

"The circumstances at the scene of Flores's death indicate that this matter involved a true, high-ranking Demon. Miss Salah, it's best if you stay in the cloister for a year to avoid any possible aftereffects."

Salah, aware of her awakening thanks to the adventurer Louis Berry's assistance, was horrified. However, lacking personal experience, she inquired, "A year? A real Demon… What kind of Demon is that?"

The Blessed, in a brown clergyman's attire, responded solemnly, "It's the Demons from the legends you've heard of, or something even more powerful."

“Wh…” Salah turned to her father with a face filled with fear, confusion, and disbelief.

Did you guys save me from such a Demon?

Pedro was equally surprised.

He had never imagined that his daughter’s situation would involve such a terrifying existence.

And Louis Berry had only received 20,000 gold risot!

No, he actually succeeded!

Pedro, having witnessed the adventurer Louis Berry’s strength through the colossal wave he created, could now grasp his power more vividly in this direct comparison.

…

In the first-class cabin suite aboard the Berries.

Lumian handed the ancient notebook and the note with Love Incantation to Ludwig and asked with a smile, “Is it edible?”

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Chapter 621 - 621 Hanth Island

621 Hanth Island

Ludwig, savoring succulent roasted lamb chops, cast a quick glance at the ancient notebook and the note containing the Love Incantation.

The knowledge and concealed content inscribed on it couldn't be extracted.

"Alright." Lumian withdrew his hand, his disappointment minimal.

He had approached Ludwig with the intention that it didn't harm asking.

Finding nothing else of interest, he settled into the recliner, immersing himself in the warm sunlight. Flipping through the ancient notebook filled with Demon legends,

Lumian found it composed entirely in Highlander. Flores, having only attended elementary grammar school, wouldn't have comprehended it otherwise.

Reading with enthusiasm, as if engrossed in a gripping novel, Lumian discovered that certain legends surpassed even the thrill of contemporary horror stories, sending shivers down his spine.

Occasionally, incantations emerged, some fabricated by the ignorant and subjected to numerous alterations. Others carried a subtle malevolence, bearing a resemblance to Naboredisley. Lumian refrained from uttering them aloud, silently reciting them instead.

The first day of the Berries' voyage unfolded in tranquil serenity.

Late at night, Lumian dreamt of enchanting scenes, weaving into blush-inducing stories that heightened his emotions.

Suddenly, Lumian awoke. Sunlight filtered through the window curtains, casting a faint glow.

It was 6 a.m.

Lying in bed, Lumian experienced a sense of loss.

He lacked the endurance of an Ascetic in dreams, causing certain scenes to be unusually poignant.

Phew… Lumian exhaled, emitting a self-deprecating laugh. Almost forgot, this isn't a boon; it's a curse.

Reverting to a physical state when Termiboros was newly sealed at 6 a.m. every morning brought benefits like fearlessness of serious injuries, no heed of energy consumption, and automatic healing.

Though thoughts of Cordu's catastrophe and his sister Aurore haunted him with each reset, the initial pain gradually dulled, becoming a bearable numbness after his psychiatric treatment. Occasionally, he felt a dull ache and emptiness.

Lumian rose from bed and drew open the curtains, revealing two contrasting scenes of the azure sea.

To the right, a crimson sun had just surfaced on the horizon. To the left, fog lingered, and waves surged, shrouding the situation 100 meters away.

Exiting the master bedroom, Lumian noticed that Lugano was already awake, captivated by the seascape.

Lugano grinned sheepishly and replied, "It's my first time in the Berserk Sea. I'm a little excited and woke up early."

On the coffee table in the room lay numerous Dutanese books recently purchased by Lumian from Port Colla. Being a primary trading port for the Southern Continent, Port Colla's citizens had a practical need to learn Dutanese, resulting in a trend. Lumian easily acquired two sets of teaching materials covering elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels, along with practice materials, thanks to various teaching aids and Dutanese instructors. This was a stark contrast to Port Santa, where obtaining a few barely usable books required considerable effort.

Lumian applauded gently.

"Not bad."

Lugano pointed towards the foggy sea and explained, "Last night, I heard from a sailor on the ship that many vessels attempted to explore the sea in that direction, but they never returned. Occasionally, people would spot one of those ships quietly passing by at night with no lights or anyone on the deck.

"They say it's the Berserk Sea. Stick to the safe sea route; attempting unknown routes often leads to unknown and irresistible danger.

"See, the sun is rising over there, right? The sea seems calm, but venture beyond the safe route, and we might face a sudden hurricane, a lightning storm, or even get melted by the sun and evaporated. These are tales from sailors; I'm not sure if they're true."

Lumian nodded and suggested, "Look into more similar rumors."

With his employer's approval, Lugano's expression brightened, finding a purpose in his work.

The voyage through the Berserk Sea proved relatively uneventful. Lumian, Ludwig, and Lugano managed to avoid causing any disruptions.

Occasionally, they witnessed storms capable of city-wide destruction or forest-like lightning. Sometimes, they noticed the absence of fish throughout the entire sea, creating an eerie silence akin to the legendary Underworld.

Guided by the seasoned captain, first mate, and sailors, the Berries navigated through these regions along the safe sea route.

After a few days, the ocean-venturing steamship reached Hanth Island, the transit port. The crew replenished coal and water, conducted machine maintenance, restocked light beer, and replenished various food supplies over two days.

"There doesn't seem to be any specialties on this island," Lugano remarked, consulting the travel guide from Port Colla. "But due to its strategic geographical location and natural deepwater port, it's one of the main transit ports controlled by the Feynapotter Kingdom."

Specialties? Does that include Demons? Lumian critiqued silently, producing two gold risots and twirling them in his hand.

"I'm going to try the local self-brewed wine."

He made his way to the port's largest bar and ordered a glass of thick, pomegranate-colored local red wine, Paha.

Lumian struck up a conversation with a few patrons near the bar counter, deliberately approaching one with a local accent.

"I met a nice chick," he said with a sly wink and an ambiguous smile. "We're going on a date later—on a quiet night. Can you share a few local horror stories? They don't have to be well-

known, just terrifying enough, preferably with a specific location. For instance, if there's a horrifying tale about an empty house on a certain street, heh heh, I plan to take her there for our date."

The local, his beard dampened with ale, set down his oak beer mug and chuckled.

"How devious, but I like you! It's a battle of wits between men and women. For victory, anything goes!"

After a brief pause, the local suggested, "You can take her on a date at the edge of the forest outside the city. You know, a forest at night is always chilling. Besides, there might be more than one Demon lurking in the woods on Hanth Island.

“As far back as I can remember, the priests have been warning everyone against venturing deep into the forest or even thinking about cutting wood in the middle of the island. There are many hidden dangers.

“As for those who claim to have seen the Demon with their own eyes, it’s said that they all met their demise—for some unknown reason.

“How about that? No woman isn’t afraid of a Demon. Well, except my wife. She’s even scarier than a Demon!”

Have the Demon stories on Hanth Island evolved to such an extent? It resembles the legend of the Montsouris ghost, but encountering a Montsouris ghost does result in the death of an entire family. Hanth Island doesn’t have such an obvious characteristic… Lumian raised his glass of red wine, toasting the local before saying, “Though I’m quite charming, I doubt any chick would be willing to follow me to the edge of the forest outside the city on our first date, especially at night. Even if she’s not afraid of me doing harm, she might worry that I’m a criminal with a penchant for harming young girls. How about this: Is there a legend of a serial killer? Ideally, one that haunts the city.”

Drawing from Aurore’s grimoires and the information gathered in recent months, Lumian discerned that Sequence 9 of the Demon pathway was Criminal, Sequence 8 was Coldblooded, and Sequence 7 was Serial Killer.

The name of Sequence 7, Serial Killer, indicated that Beyonders, regardless of their grasp of the acting method, would actively or passively engage in serial killings.

Although the Demon on Hanth Island had clearly surpassed Sequence 7 and evolved beyond the Serial Killer stage, Lumian wondered whether, as a high-ranking individual who had progressed through the ranks, it retained certain preferences acquired during its Serial Killer phase.

Intelligent beings, be they human or of a certain creature, tended to maintain certain desires if not deliberately restrained or controlled.

Just as humans might occasionally indulge in a drink, Demons might occasionally engage in serial killings.

Moreover, if Naboredisley’s commission wasn’t concocted merely for a verbal agreement, the Demon of Hanth Island or its descendants should be concealed among humans.

The bearded local pondered for a moment before responding, “There haven’t been any serial killers. In a small place like ours, if serial murders were happening, everyone in the city would know.”

He paused, then added, “But what if someone goes missing in the forest outside the city every year? Would that count?”

…

In Trier, Franca, Jenna, and Anthony managed to gather sufficient information about Moran Avigny, the current Minister of Industry.

This information included a color photograph.

In the picture, Moran Avigny displayed a striking resemblance to an Intisian. Despite his age, he exuded an air of elegance.

In his late sixties, his once-black hair had transitioned into a distinguished gray. Refined facial features and dark gray eyes added to his overall presence, with the wrinkles on his face highlighting the passage of time.

“Dark gray eyes are rare in Intis…” Franca sighed.

Mid-sentence, she abruptly halted.

Another individual with dark-gray eyes in Intis crossed her mind—Demoness of Black Clarice.

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Chapter 622 - 622 Smell of Death

622 Smell of Death

Under normal circumstances, dark-gray eyes wouldn't usually grab one's attention. Such pupils were rare in Intis but not uncommon in places like the Loen Kingdom. However, Franca sensed that there was crucial information hidden within.

Moran Avigny was suspected to be a Mirror Person. The Demoness of Black Clarice pursued the Mirror People, and being a demigod of the Demoness pathway closely related to the Mirror World, they all shared those unusual dark gray eyes.

Too much of a coincidence, isn't it?

"What's wrong?" Jenna asked with concern when Franca paused.

Franca deliberated for a few seconds before revealing that the Demoness of Black shared the same eye color as Moran Avigny. Finally, she said, "None of the Mirror People we encountered previously had such characteristics."

"Only relatively special Mirror People have them? Is the Demoness of Black also a Mirror Person?" Jenna guessed, her thoughts wandering.

"Impossible," Franca subconsciously denied. "She even tasked me with investigating the Mirror People… Right, it's not impossible. Haven't we read enough stories of burglars calling the police to catch thieves?"

Anthony thought for a moment and said, "Could it be a symbol of being corrupted by the mirror's Primordial Demoness? Could special Mirror People at a certain level have such eye color? Could it be the same for a Demoness who has become a demigod and has been corrupted?

"No, Moran Avigny should have had dark gray eyes to begin with. It's impossible for the Mirror People who replaced him to change the color of his eyes without attracting suspicion," Franca pondered and deduced, "In other words, does the Demoness of Black come from the same family as the original Moran Avigny? I previously thought she belonged to the Sauron family and was Browns Sauron's elder. Otherwise, she wouldn't have nurtured such a simple-minded Demoness. Now, it doesn't seem so…"

"Not necessarily," Franca and Jenna said in unison.

Everyone had a paternal and maternal side of the family. Just because they were from the Sauron family didn't mean they weren't from a dark-gray-eyed family!

Franca hesitated for a few seconds before saying, “It’s been a while since I updated the Demoness of Black on the Mirror People investigation. I plan to visit her this week and discuss Moran Avigny.”

“Be careful,” Jenna cautioned.

A gleaming smile played on Franca’s lips as she replied, “Don’t worry. She tasked me with the Mirror People inquiry, so she should anticipate some updates. If she has ties with Moran Avigny, we might see something unfolding for the Minister of Industry shortly. If not, we can seek her assistance!”

…

On Hanth Island, Lumian strolled through the dimly lit streets, relishing the cool sea breeze that replaced the earlier heat as he casually headed back to the Berries.

Hands tucked into his pockets, his mind raced with unusual activity. He sifted through the legends and stories he had recently gathered, attempting to uncover any hints about the elusive Demon.

Had Madam Magician not issued a cautious warning, and had Naboredisley not disclosed the Demon descendant’s name and identity, Lumian might have considered using himself as bait. In such circumstances, he could have showcased his malice, devised a plan with a chance of success, triggering the Demon’s Danger Premonition, luring it out to eliminate the perceived threat. A concealed trap would await it.

It’s been a century or two. Numerous adventurers have ventured to unravel the Demon legend. Despite the Church of Earth Mother’s relentless efforts to eradicate lingering issues, there’s still no resolution. Relying on conventional methods to track down that elusive Demon seems impractical…

Looking at it from a different angle, why would the Demon choose to remain on Hanth Island?

The Church of Earth Mother already purged it once. Why take the risk to stay?

If it were me, I would have relocated ages ago. As a Demon, where couldn’t I survive?

If I truly believed I was a highly intelligent criminal—a genuine Criminal—why use such a method to taunt the clergy of the Church of Earth Mother? It would become dull after all these years…

Could there be a reason for its persistence on Hanth Island?

Is it perhaps partially sealed? Or is there something profoundly significant buried on the island that cannot be moved?

The valley ablaze with sulfurous flames?

Moreover, Demons can live for centuries, but ordinary people cannot. If the Demon indeed concealed itself in human towns, it would have to change identities every few decades, potentially leaving traces.

Hanth Island serves as a transit port for trade routes between the Northern and Southern Continents. With numerous foreign settlers, the Demon can effortlessly forge a new identity. However, how can it smoothly exit the stage with its original identity?

The residents here all devoutly follow Earth Mother. Upon their demise, they are invariably sent to the cathedral for a wake. Would a Demon have the audacity to feign death and undergo Earth Mother's scrutiny and the purifying touch of holy water?

Yes, vanishing is the optimal solution. Whether through a sea adventure or disappearing into the forest, it effectively sidesteps corresponding problems.

Every year, people vanish in the forest outside the city… Did the Demon purposely orchestrate some accidents, concealing its 'death' among them? Lumian's thoughts raced as he gradually formulated deductions and speculations.

This was also a tempering of a Conspirer's powers and a method to digest the potion.

He had a vague understanding of the entire situation.

If I want to locate the Demon concealed among humans, I must find the mysterious valley ablaze with sulfur flames deep in the forest. To unravel the valley's secret, I must rely on that Demon. These two matters are likely intertwined and inseparable.

Lumian had a tentative plan for tomorrow's investigation.

I'll begin by exploring the forest, utilizing my Hunter powers to search for the remains of the missing. If I discover one or two, and they still retain some edible structure, I'll bring them back to Ludwig and determine who the deceased last encountered.

Throughout this process, without alerting the clergy of the Church of Earth Mother, I'll delve deeper into the island to identify any anomalies. If they exist, what kind of anomalies they are…

As he strolled leisurely, Lumian suddenly looked up and observed the stars in the sky veiled by dark clouds.

In an instant, torrential rain poured down.

Drops of rain misted in front of Lumian. Without an umbrella, he had no choice but to dash under the eaves of a three-story building on the street and seek refuge outside a café with its lights off. He waited for the storm to end impassively.

The few pedestrians on the road unfurled their umbrellas.

Lumian couldn't help but chuckle as he recalled the common depiction of the Berserk Sea's islands in the travel guide: The weather is highly erratic; remember to bring an umbrella or a hat when out.

Clearly, Lumian didn't take the reminder seriously.

He wasn't in a rush. Leaning against the café's two glass windows, he quietly observed the raindrops streak down and the people returning home late traverse different streets.

The sound of the rain masked all movement, and white mist veiled most of his vision, creating the sensation for Lumian as if he were in another world.

Observing this scene, Lumian reminisced about his wandering days.

Wanderers often struggled to predict the weather, making it challenging to secure refuge in cathedrals and other places in Directly support the authors on WebNovel!

advance. Consequently, he would occasionally huddle in a corner of a street, sheltered from the rain. He watched the rain with fear, worry, uneasiness, and gloom, praying that no other vagabond would snatch his temporary shelter.

But now, his mood was entirely different.

The heavy rain in the Berserk Sea ceased as swiftly as it had arrived. In less than half an hour, only stagnant water remained on the street.

Lumian chuckled and tucked his hands back into his pockets. He strolled along the wet street toward the harbor and boarded the Berries.

Just as Lumian pushed open the door and entered, he saw Lugano wiping Ludwig's dripping hair with a dry and fluffy towel. Ludwig looked as if he had taken an unexpected plunge.

"You didn't bring an umbrella?" Lumian asked with a smile.

Lugano replied awkwardly, "I thought I was a Planter and could predict changes in the weather in advance, so I didn't bring an umbrella and led Ludwig to the streets to buy supper. He said he didn't want to eat cakes and biscuits tonight. Sigh, who knew that even though I predicted a rainstorm, it only took tens of seconds before it arrived. At that time, I wanted to carry Ludwig and rush back to the ship before the rain started…"

Seeing that the Doctor didn't seek an objective reason and only complained about his lack of ability, Lumian kindly added,

"This is the weather in the Berserk Sea. Even Planters can't predict it."

This was also one of the reasons why the islands in the Berserk Sea, clearly under the rule of the Church of Earth Mother, didn't always experience bumper harvests like the Feynapotter Kingdom.

"Yes, yes, yes." Lugano heaved a sigh of relief.

Lumian turned to Ludwig, whose hair was now dry, and casually inquired, "Do you smell anything?"

Is there any particularly alluring "food" hidden nearby?

Ludwig nibbled on a tortilla and responded, "There's the smell of death."

Smell of death? Lumian frowned slightly.

"Did someone die near the night market?"

Ludwig shook his head.

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"When it rains, there's the smell of death everywhere."

What… what does this mean? Lumian probed, voicing his doubts.

Ludwig replied candidly, "I don't know. It disappeared later."

It happens when it rains, but not after… Is this an abnormality from the Berserk Sea, or is it the island's abnormality triggered by the Berserk Sea's weather? Lumian pondered for a moment, but he wasn't in a rush to write to Madam Magician and inquire.

This was a digestion opportunity for him. He felt that he should avoid relying on the power of a high-ranking person to digest it better unless it was crucial.

That night, Lumian fell asleep with a heavy heart.

In his hazy dream, he saw many familiar and unfamiliar things.

The pale-white Samaritan Women's Spring, the mountain- sized Blood Emperor's afterimage dripping with yellowish magma, and the unknown object protruding from the spring…

The scene suddenly changed, revealing Lumian wandering alone in the deep darkness underground.

It was as if he had become the Montsouris ghost.

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Chapter 623 - 623 Grave Digging

623 Grave Digging

In the endless darkness, cramped quarters, and jumbled thoughts, Lumian found himself unusually frustrated, even within the confines of his dreams. He longed to rip apart the cage around him and shatter everything in his path.

Slowly, the realization dawned upon him that he was dreaming. He struggled to open his eyes and wake up, but his efforts were in vain. Each time he thought he had finally awakened, in the blink of an eye, he plunged into a deeper darkness and a more profound dream.

After an unknown stretch of time, Lumian naturally awoke to some light seeping through the curtained window.

It was 6 a.m.

Lumian raised his right hand and wiped his forehead, sensing a layer of cold sweat.

Is this a spiritual warning, or had memories of the Samaritan Women's Spring and the afterimage of the Blood Emperor haunted me after I contemplated the smell of death on Hanth Island yesterday? Previously, I had drawn connections between the mysterious deaths of those who witnessed the Demon and the Montsouris ghost, possibly leading to a shallow corruption? Lumian couldn't accurately decipher the complete meaning of the dream. All he could do was remind himself to be cautious and stay focused on his original goal for coming to Hanth Island:

To investigate the Demon legends, not to eliminate the Demon.

Setting aside whether he possessed the strength to face the Demon or if he needed assistance, the fact that the Church of Earth Mother had operated on the island for over a century without completely eradicating the target suggested even the Tarot Club's Major Arcana card holders might not resolve this matter entirely.

Lumian got out of bed and retrieved the golden pocket watch from Salle de Bal Brise. Opening and glancing at it: 6:01 a.m.

Though early, Lumian felt a sense of urgency. The Berries would depart from Hanth Island the morning after tomorrow. He had only two days to delve into the Demon legends, unravel the truth, and identify potential suspects.

If he succeeded, his Conspirer potion might very well be digested.

Gathering, screening, and utilizing information were crucial aspects of a conspiracy!

And if Lumian were a Sequence 7 Detective of the Reader pathway, successfully solving a century-old unsolved case involving high-level powers in just two days would be a remarkable leap from initial digestion to complete digestion.

…

At 9 a.m., in the suburbs of Port Hanth, Return Cemetery.

Holding a bunch of yellow flowers, Lumian navigated through the tree-lined cemetery.

Armed with Ludwig's intel and the insights from the previous night's dream, he adjusted his plan. Instead of hastily venturing into the forest to search for the missing people's remains, he decided to dig up graves here!

His objective: to investigate the circumstances surrounding the mysterious death of someone who had glimpsed the Demon's figure in the forest depths. He aimed to discover if they would meet the same fate as those killed by the Montsouris ghost—exhibiting self-mutilation.

According to the gathered information, the last person to report the Demon's presence to the Church of Earth Mother rested in a quiet corner of Return Cemetery.

His name was Antonio Elias.

Before long, Lumian, clutching the bouquet of yellow flowers, reached the grave. Apart from the deceased's name, birth and death dates, a concise epitaph adorned the stone tombstone: "This wretched man's life was taken by a Demon."

Lumian stooped down, placing the bouquet before the tombstone. Then, he straightened up, silently studying the stone tomb.

Details about Antonio Elias flashed through his mind.

A local, not a foreigner, with parents, a wife, and children. Nine months ago, during a hunting trip in the forest, he encountered a wandering Demon. Fearing his imminent demise, he sought refuge in the cathedral and cloister of the Church of Earth Mother for a full five months. Afterwards, intending to serve as a crew member for three years, steering clear of Hanth Island and its hidden dangers, he was discovered dead at the bottom of the cabin on his second voyage…

Lumian scanned the surroundings, gathering ten to twenty withered branches from beneath nearby trees. He planted them around Antonio Elias's tomb, forming a short, makeshift, and somewhat futile barrier.

Lastly, he laid a withered branch flat on two adjacent branches, constructing a shaky door impassable to anyone.

With that completed, Lumian stepped over the “wall” and entered the grave.

He then bent down, extending his right hand to touch the makeshift door constructed of withered branches.

Simultaneously, a black mark activated on his body.

In the blink of an eye, Lumian’s figure vanished. Antonio’s tomb remained undisturbed, except for the added circle of withered branches.

In reality, Lumian had retrieved an iron pick, shovel, and other items from his just-purchased Traveler’s Bag. He began prying open the stone slabs and digging into the soil.

Bottle of Fiction!

Lumian utilized the “wall” and “door” he had fashioned to employ the Bottle of Fiction contract ability.

In less than two minutes, relying on his understanding of the cemetery’s layout and two precise explosions, Lumian cleared the soil from the coffin and pried open the black-painted wooden plank.

A pungent odor of decay wafted out, and Lumian casually ignited it.

After a brief wait, he squatted down, donned gloves, and examined the white bones, now devoid of flesh and blood.

The first item he picked up was Antonio Elias’s skull. With a cursory glance, he noted cracks on the inside of the skull, while the exterior remained intact.

A brain explosion as the cause of death? Lumian pondered the force required to induce such damage. Regardless of the ability responsible, Antonio’s cerebrum, cerebellum, and brain stem should have exploded into mush at the time of his demise. It seemed illogical for the hard inner cranium to crack while the soft brain remained unharmed.

Examining Antonio Elias’s other bones yielded no additional injuries. The stains in the coffin offered no further clues.

Lumian concluded that Antonio’s death resulted from an internal explosion in his head. The explosive force, while not physically strong enough to shatter his skull entirely, was sufficient to destroy his brain.

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quality of the flames. I should be able to achieve a similar effect. How did the Demon do it? Lumian's comprehension of the Demon pathway came from his sister's grimoires, information provided by the Tarot Club, and Franca's account. He had only truly interacted with a Demon above Sequence 6 once, and that was with Naboredisley.

He immediately recollected the sensations when Naboredisley stirred his desires and emotions. The echoes of the ranting transmitted through the gray fog during Naboredisley's expulsion and the tumult of his own desires replayed in his mind.

For ordinary people, inducing an upheaval in their desires before detonating them could lead to their brains exploding, given an increase in potency… It shouldn't be a challenging feat for a demigod creature like a Demon. Moreover, the Demon can use those ravings to achieve this remotely? As Lumian completed his deduction, he was convinced that a Demon was indeed concealed on Hanth Island. A Demon of the Criminal pathway, a Demon surpassing Sequences like Devil and Desire Apostle.

With this confirmation, Lumian believed it would be relatively straightforward to locate the Demon if he put his mind to it.

However, the prerequisite was finding it and not resolving the situation, all while risking his life.

Removing the glove, he reached into his Traveler's Bag and touched the Flog boxing gloves.

Following the incident with the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings and the Great Mother, Lumian had already speculated that the Mother Tree of Desire stood at the peak of the Prisoner, Criminal, and Scrooge pathways. Therefore, the Rose School of Thought's indulgence faction and some members of the Devil family believed in Her and followed Her.

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In that case, the Flog boxing gloves made from the branches of the Tree of Shadow, closely related to the Mother Tree of Desire, had a high chance of attracting the Demon's attention within a certain range. Just as its negative effects meant being observed by some hidden entities, influenced and attacked by dangerous creatures!

Phew, there are no useless items. Only Beyonders who don't know how to use them. Lumian chuckled self-

deprecatingly and withdrew his right hand from the Flog boxing gloves.

He abandoned the plan to directly lure out the Demon.

This decision stemmed from the realization that the Demon was still active on the island, claiming lives, yet the Church of Earth Mother hadn't eradicated it

completely!

Having encountered various challenges, Lumian possessed a reasonable understanding of an orthodox Church's strength. He knew that if the Church of Earth Mother genuinely committed, it could eliminate all residents suspected to be Demons and obliterate the island, similar to what the Church of Storms had done to Bansy Harbor.

It wasn't that the Church of Earth Mother lacked the will, but there was a reason holding them back.

This brought Lumian's thoughts back to the valley burning with sulfurous flames deep in the forest. He believed that the Demon couldn't be slain under regular circumstances. It could only be sealed and constrained.

As the Church of Earth Mother couldn't achieve this, and Lumian doubted his ability to do so, enticing the Demon directly would be futile and perilous.

Lumian's current strategy involved leveraging his fake level and Directly support the authors on WebNovel!

his allure to evil gods to traverse the forest. During critical moments, he planned to use the Flog boxing gloves to see if he could converge on the mysterious valley burning with sulfur flames to investigate the source of the Demon legends.

…

In the heart of the forest, surrounded by towering trees, Lumian navigated a path untouched by human presence for years. He moved forward at a measured pace.

From time to time, he would extract the Flog boxing gloves, relying on intuition to guide his course. After ten to twenty seconds, he stowed them away.

After almost an hour, the dense forest unexpectedly cleared.

A menacing brown bear emerged from behind a tree, advancing toward Lumian with ponderous steps.

"Stop, foreigner!"

The bear's mouth emitted a buzzing human voice.

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Chapter 624 - 624 More Than One?

624 More Than One?

Lumian remained unfazed as the brown bear uttered words in precise Highlander. Instead of fear, delight filled him–a clear sign that he had stumbled upon the correct location!

This was the Planter pathway, the main pathway of the Church of Earth Mother, known as a Druid at Sequence 5. Capable of transforming into a formidable three-meter-tall bear.

Encountering a human-speaking brown bear in the desolate forest of Hanth Island hinted at his proximity to the heavily guarded area, possibly the mysterious valley of sulfur flames from Demon legends.

Without the signature golden straw hat, Lumian studied the brown bear's furry visage openly, making no effort to conceal his extraordinary nature.

"Alright," he sighed with regret, turning on his heels and retracing his steps.

Twenty to thirty meters away, Lumian vanished from the brown bear's view, concealed by towering trees that had stood for over a century.

He halted, leaning against a tree trunk, and casually retrieved an item from his Traveler's Bag.

It was a pair of brown gold-rimmed glasses–the Mystery Prying Glasses!

Lumian had no intention of recklessly breaching the Church of Earth Mother's protective circle and venturing into the sealed-off region.

Perhaps it was no safer than confronting the hidden Demon on Hanth Island.

Without sufficient and effective information, Lumian wasn't inclined to take such risks.

What if it resembled Fourth Epoch Trier?

Lumian's strategy involved skirting the edges of the problem zone, wielding the Mystery Prying Glasses to shift his perspective and uncover hidden truths.

From Lumian's familiarity with the Mystery Prying Glasses from previous, the item's lower level hindered his ability to directly perceive various seals. In Trier, he had utilized them multiple times but couldn't catch a direct glimpse of Fourth

Epoch Trier. Instead, he witnessed concealed elements beneath the ground, lurking in darkness, or disguised through distorted, overlooking, or prying angles.

This inherent flaw safeguarded Lumian from directly encountering the Church of Earth Mother's sealed artifact, thus averting potential catastrophe. Nonetheless, it allowed him to discern abnormal traces.

And that was sufficient!

More traces equaled more information, bringing Lumian closer to the elusive truth!

Ready to teleport at a moment's notice, Lumian positioned the brown gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose.

An unsettling dizziness gripped him, akin to being buried underground. Despite looking up at the soil, trees, and sky, he sensed an elevated vantage point, overseeing everything.

Withering tree bark, decaying leaves, crawling insects, and animals circling a water source–all these details and buried bones spun in Lumian's vision, inducing nausea from the depths of his soul.

Amidst the nausea creeping from the depths of his soul, Lumian's gaze fixated on a startling sight.

Silent blue flames devoured the entire landscape.

Whether above, below, or around the flames, the trees swiftly transformed into an inky black, dissolving into sewage. From the decaying remnants, new trees sprouted, rapidly expanding and flourishing.

In the midst of the blue inferno, Lumian vaguely discerned a crimson, colossal figure sprawled at the core. Submerged in pitch-black, viscous sewage, it sank gradually, only to be yanked upward by an invisible force.

This unseen power emanated from beyond the withering and burgeoning forest, from…

Abruptly, a pair of eyes materialized within Lumian's line of sight.

They were bloodshot, icy-blue eyes tinged with pain.

Without hesitation, Lumian removed the Mystery Prying Glasses and activated the black mark representing Spirit World Traversal.

Swiftly fading, he disappeared into the forest and reappeared outside the Church of Earth Mother Cathedral in Port Hanth, behind the familiar stone pillar observed earlier that morning.

After stashing the Mystery Prying Glasses back into his Traveler's Bag, Lumian departed the secluded spot. Blending in with believers, he entered the cathedral exuding scents of wheat and milk, occupying a pew closest to the Sacred Emblem of Life. With crossed arms, he mimicked the old man in a black formal suit, feigning prayer.

Only then did he exhale a sigh of relief, assured that those icy-blue eyes wouldn't target or lock onto him.

These Mystery Prying Glasses could pass through countless hands if not in my possession. Its negative effects are indeed unique and beneficial, but they're also very dangerous… Lumian couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

Then, he analyzed the scenes witnessed through the Mystery Prying Glasses.

There's a region engulfed in sulfur flames, but the Church of Earth Mother's trees seal it off, cycling between death and rebirth. It's nearly impossible to spot from the outside. Even with the Mystery Prying Glasses, I can only vaguely discern its outline.

It's akin to lurking outside a cage and surveying the interior through the gaps in the railing. Despite the Mystery Prying Glasses' capabilities, they shouldn't breach the seal.

That colossal, blood-colored figure resembles a small mountain, yet I can't discern any details… Could it be the true form of the Demon of Hanth Island? How can others see it when it's sealed inside, causing those who witness it to mysteriously vanish?

Could there be more than one Demon on Hanth Island? The ice-blue eyes staring at me may belong to another Demon. Is it utilizing the invisible connection between itself and the blood-colored Demon to prevent its descent into the pitch-

black, viscous sewage?

If so, the Church of Earth Mother should eliminate the Demon active both outside and on the island. By doing so, the blood-colored Demon would lose its assistance.

Or does the Church of Earth Mother not want the blood-

colored Demon to completely sink into the pitch-black sewage, letting the ice-blue-eyed Demon exist only to restrict its range and frequency?

If it's not entirely sealed, would the invisible connection between the two parties disappear? Is it because the ice-blue-

eyed Demon will also be affected by the pitch-black sewage?

Lumian deepened his understanding and speculations regarding the Demon legends on Hanth Island. He sensed that his Conspirer potion had become active, showing signs of digestion, but it was still one step away.

He wasn't in a rush to succeed. Instead, he pondered the mission that Naboredisley hadn't entrusted to him and Franca.

Killing a Demon descendant from an island in the Berserk Sea…

That's correct, a descendant! The ice-blue-eyed Demon is a descendant of that blood-colored Demon. Is that why an invisible connection binds them?

Does Naboredisley desire the blood-colored Demon to fully submerge into the pitch-black sewage?

Is this beneficial or detrimental for the blood-colored Demon?

If it's beneficial, it makes sense why the Earth Mother Church impedes it. Why does the blood-colored Demon's descendant persist in pulling and preventing its descent?

Suppose the ice-blue-eyed Demon is under the control of the Church of Earth Mother, yet it can kill and cause disappearances. Conversely, why doesn't it flee Hanth Island? This implies that it's not in the ice-blue-eyed Demon's favor if the blood-colored Demon were to completely sink into the pitch-black sewage. It's even willing to forfeit its freedom to obstruct it.

If it's not favorable, perhaps Naboredisley isn't deceiving. It's an adversary of the blood-colored Demon, hoping for its complete submersion and assimilation by the pitch-black sewage. This might have a certain impact on Hanth Island, the Berserk Sea, or even the entire world. That's why the Church of Earth Mother seals and monitors it…

Can't they just kill it? Without the blood-colored Demon, the issue of it sinking completely into the pitch-black sewage would cease…

Can't be killed?

What Naboredisley feared wasn't that the blood-colored Demon might sense danger, but that the Church of Earth Mother might be alerted?

Lumian gradually understood the mentality and stance of the Church of Earth Mother, the local Demon, and Naboredisley, but he lacked sufficient evidence.

What he was most certain of now was: the pitch-black, viscous sewage wasn't simple!

Perhaps it was something akin to the Samaritan Women's Spring.

Furthermore, it bore a striking resemblance to the pitch-black form of the Montsouris ghost.

Trier's catacombs is a labyrinth of complexity, filled with corruption and unique monsters that defy easy elimination. It's the aftermath of Blood Emperor Alista Tudor's significant accomplishment, an act that nearly brought the gods down with Him. Ultimately, He perished. What could be the reason for Hanth Island? Could it be a divine battle and the demise of a deity?

That's not beyond the realm of possibility… While my knowledge of the Fourth Epoch's history is limited, I do know that the Berserk Sea was not as tumultuous back then. There were still interactions between the Northern and Southern Continents. Could it be that another emperor from the War of the Four Emperors or two emperors met Their end here, permanently reshaping the terrain and weather to give rise to the Berserk Sea?

Is this the manifestation of a deity's power? The Blood Emperor sank a colossal city underground, forcing over a million people to live above it to contain the subsequent effects. And the deity who perished here has been influencing the Berserk Sea for more than a thousand years. This surpasses the waters near Port Santa… As Lumian sighed, he prepared to stand up and return to the Berries to strategize his next move for gathering more information.

Sensing the quietude around him, his movements softened, cautious not to disturb the prayers of the Earth Mother believers.

Subconsciously scanning his surroundings, Lumian noticed that the believer beside him had also finished praying and retracted his arms.

A gray-haired old man in a black formal suit with a bow tie caught Lumian's eye. His face bore well-defined features, and his beard was meticulously shaved.

In the next moment, Lumian observed the elder turning his head—revealing bloodshot ice-blue eyes.

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Chapter 625 - 625 Repentance

625 Repentance

Ice-blue eyes!

That Demon!

It's lurking right there in the cathedral!

Lumian tensed. Without a second thought, he tried to teleport away.

This time, he chose Trier–the entrance to Saint Vi?¨ve Cathedral!

In that moment, his reflection stared back at him in those chilling, ice-blue eyes.

His face twisted, expression sinister, eyes cold.

Soon, Lumians manifested, encircling him.

There was one Lumian, eyes intoxicated, breathing heavy, face flushed red. Another, trembling in fear. Another, expressionless and resolute. One, lost and sorrowful. Another, with no will to live. And one more, eyes filled with anger and hatred, red with intensity…

In an instant, Lumian seemed to multiply into countless versions, each appearing tangible.

This severely impacted his thoughts and actions, hindering him from activating the contract mark representing Spirit World Traversal.

Instinctively, he focused his remaining will on his right hand and the mark left by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor.

To escape this state and gain the strength to teleport away, he needed to terrify the ice-blue-eyed Demon!

Suddenly, Lumian heard ravings filled with intense madness and depravity.

His mind turned to mush, swelling dangerously.

The Blood Emperor's aura didn't activate in time.

Fragmented, emotional, and painful thoughts burst in Lumian's mind like fireworks before gradually descending.

An intense burning sensation in his chest anchored him, preventing complete loss of self.

After an unknown span of time, Lumian finally regained command of his thoughts.

His first thought was: I'm still alive?

It must have been a considerable duration since the onslaught of ravings and his subsequent awakening. The Demon's power could have easily ended him multiple times!

As Lumian concentrated on his right hand, he scrutinized the Demon with ice-blue eyes.

The white-haired Demon, adorned in a black formal suit and bow tie, sat upright once more, facing the Sacred Emblem of Life. It inclined slightly, crossing its arms over its chest.

Shutting its eyes, it whispered with a pained expression, "Oh, merciful Mother, I implore your mercy for my transgressions…"

Merciful Mother, I implore your mercy for my transgressions… Lumian's resolve wavered as he abandoned activating the Blood Emperor's aura.

He settled beside the Demon.

Observing the Sacred Emblem of Life on the altar, he waited silently, refraining from disrupting the Demon's repentance. Contemplating his encounter, he mused quietly.

The various selves I witnessed must be genuine illusions–not existing in the physical world but within my heart and mind…

Could this be a sophisticated manifestation of emotional and desire fluctuations, triggering individual emotions and desires to vie for control of the body without reaching the point of dissociation?

The subsequent ravings resembled Naboredisley's frenzied curse upon expulsion. Yet, this time, there was no shield from Mr. Fool's gray fog. Well, not entirely absent. Otherwise, the mad river of ravings would have capsized my identity. Even if I hadn't lost control, I would have succumbed completely before the Demon found its "conscience" and started repenting…

I believed the safest haven on Hanth Island was the cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother. I specifically chose it to evade the Demon. Surprisingly, it's praying here… Judging by this, blind trust in the orthodox Church's cathedrals might not be foolproof in the future. Without adequate information, nothing is absolute…

Yet, it was only within the cathedral that I survived. Anywhere else, it would be Termiboros grappling with the ice-blue-eyed Demon. Then, the Angels of the orthodox Churches and the Tarot Club would descend…

Lumian had formed some hypotheses and waited with assurance. He condensed his experiences and absorbed his lesson.

After a brief span, the white-haired, ice-blue-eyed Demon, donned in a black formal suit, concluded its repentance. Its expression regained composure, but the blood vessels in its eyes deepened.

Only then did Lumian observe the black leather gloves on both of its hands. Even during confession and prayer, they remained unremoved–a departure from devout believer behavior. In the human world, wearing gloves while praying was deemed disrespectful to a deity, except in emergencies or special circumstances. The same applied to wearing a hat.

The Demon cast a glance at Lumian and spoke in a deep but composed voice, "You haven't fled yet. Aren't you afraid of angering me again?"

Lumian gazed at the Sacred Emblem of Life and smiled.

"I'm not. This is Earth Mother's cathedral."

"Weren't we in the cathedral just now?" The Demon moderated its volume, not disturbing the other supplicants.

"Occasional accidents are understandable," Lumian replied unhurriedly. "Moreover, I believe you can certainly control yourself in a short period. It'll be more challenging beyond half a year."

The Demon also directed its gaze at the altar, its ice-blue eyes reflecting the Sacred Emblem of Life.

"Why do you think so?"

"I'm an experienced adventurer," Lumian said with a smile. "I know that orthodox Churches adhere to a common rule. Survivors entangled in a mysticism incident are often drawn into the Church if there's any hidden danger. They become civilian staff and receive long-term protection to prevent sudden deaths. However, those who witnessed the Demon's figure on Hanth Island didn't undergo this process. They only received a few months of protection before departing.

"Could it be that the Church fears prolonged stays might lead to deaths even within the cathedral or cloister?

"In such instances, it would undoubtedly tarnish the Church's reputation. One can't keep a constant watch on higher-level powers indefinitely."

The white-haired Demon fell silent for a few moments before confessing, “I didn’t want to kill them, but I…”

At this point, its face twisted once more, icy-blue eyes filled with pain.

Once again, it crossed its arms over its chest, resuming a low-

voiced prayer.

This time, it swiftly regained its composure.

Lumian resumed the conversation with a smile.

“Don’t tell me you penned all those epitaphs for those people?”

“That’s correct.” The Demon in the black suit maintained its slightly forward-leaning posture.

It seems this Demon has a rather amicable relationship with the Church of Earth Mother… Not strictly devout, but a believer nonetheless… Lumian understood that the ice-blue- eyed Demon wouldn’t respond even if he inquired. Such questions might even provoke serious consequences. He had to capitalize on its stable emotions to seek some details.

Before Lumian could speak, the Demon posed a question.

“Foreigner, why did you come to Hanth Island?”

Lumian deliberately smiled.

“I previously encountered a Demon incident…”

Lumian briefly recounted Salah’s encounter with the Love Incantation in Port Colla. While leading the investigation, the suspect’s body had been suddenly commandeered by a Demon seeking a deal, which he rejected. Lumian, utilizing undisclosed official powers, had then expelled the other party.

Lumian omitted details about the Love Incantation’s content and refrained from mentioning Naboredisley’s name, fearing deep-seated animosity that might trigger intense agitation.

Concluding, he stated, “I read in the notebook about Demon legends on Hanth Island, connected to the deal the Demon sought. Intrigued, I decided to investigate. My intention wasn’t to finish off anyone.”

“You can’t finish off anyone either,” the Demon with ice-blue eyes remarked candidly.

It continued gazing at the Sacred Emblem of Life and added in a calm, deep voice, “Curiosity kills the cat.”

Lumian chuckled.

“It’s indeed risky, but finding you within a day and discovering the sealed valley indicates my capabilities.”

Next time, I’ll choose a safer “sanctuary.”

The Demon with ice-blue eyes, with few wrinkles, smiled—an uncommon sight.

“Your methods are unconventional, but they align with the mysticism world’s underlying laws.

“But had I not controlled myself and repented for past deeds, you would be dead. Such an investigation would have been futile.”

Lumian didn’t dispute. With the information he gathered, he knew there was no immediate danger in the cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother. The recent episode proved to be a false alarm.

He shifted the topic.

“Why did that inexplicable Demon target you?

“Moreover, with the strength of me and my companions, it’s likely impossible to eradicate a so-called Demon descendant like you. Was it deliberately leading us to our demise?”

The Demon, clad in a black suit, kept its gaze fixed on the Sacred Emblem of Life and responded, “I’m not certain which one you encountered.”

It refused to disclose more.

Lumian didn’t dare press further, let alone provoke. His mind raced, searching for an alternate approach.

“You seem unrestricted. Why not leave Hanth Island?

“There appears to be some force influencing you here.”

The Demon’s expression twisted as it stated, “This is my duty and my atonement.

“Since converting to Earth Mother, there are times when I can’t resist the urge to kill, accumulating profound sins.”

Recalling his earlier deduction, Lumian inquired casually, “Then why not fully confine yourself?”

“Confinement won’t suffice. I can’t do it, and it can’t be achieved that way.” The Demon with ice-blue eyes displayed pain once again.

Indeed, closely tied to the blood-colored Demon in the valley… Yet, as a Coldblooded, why does the act of killing, and the subsequent "healing" by the Church of Earth Mother's reverence for life, still cause you pain? Lumian decided to steer the conversation to a less sensitive realm and soothe the other party.

In a relaxed tone, he said, "I apologize. I wasn't courteous earlier and failed to inquire about your preferred address."

The Demon with ice-blue eyes stared blankly for a moment before responding, "Naboredisley."

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Chapter 626 - 626 Blatant Malice

626 Blatant Malice

Naboredisley? Lumian almost thought the ice-blue-eyed Demon was jesting with him.

However, he swiftly confirmed a crucial detail.

When it came to matters concerning the Love Incantation, he had never uttered the name Naboredisley!

Not only did he fear that Naboredisley and the ice-blue-eyed Demon were adversaries, but he also adhered to Madam Magician's instructions to abstain from writing or speaking this name.

If so, why did the ice-blue-eyed Demon identify itself as Naboredisley?

Could it truly be the genuine Naboredisley?

Then, why did the repeated chanting of "Naboredisley" summon a different Demon and not the ice-blue-eyed one?

Or were they equals? Was Naboredisley scheming to manipulate someone else into killing me?

Amidst Lumian's astonishment and confusion, a smile crept onto his face.

"I wouldn't dare utter that name."

He was testing the Demon with ice-blue eyes.

The Demon with ice-blue eyes turned towards Lumian.

"You've heard of Naboredisley and are aware of the concealed perils of uttering this name?"

"Yes," Lumian replied with a grin.

From the Demon's reaction, it seems unlikely to be the one propagating the Love Incantation… That's intriguing… Lumian pondered.

Though this might unveil greater horrors and deeper secrets, as a Hunter, fear and curiosity didn't contradict each other. It was akin to how everyone in the army feared death, yet it didn't deter them from banding together for combat.

The Demon with ice-blue eyes nodded slowly and spoke, “Here, within Earth Mother’s cathedral, you needn’t fret about uttering the name Naboredisley.”

“That’s evidently not the name you typically go by. Why don’t you disclose your true name instead?” Lumian didn’t reply. Instead, he posed a query.

He had a persistent feeling that the other party intended to harm him.

Had he not encountered the Love Incantation and received guidance from Madam Magician, he might have inadvertently mentioned the concealed Demon on Hanth Island, Naboredisley, after leaving Earth Mother’s cathedral today. That could have been troublesome!

The Demon with ice-blue eyes fell silent for a few moments before stating, “The name I go by in human society holds no significance for you.

“Moreover, after learning the name Naboredisley and uttering it at least three times outside the cathedral…

At this juncture, the white-haired Demon’s visage twitched, and a pained expression surfaced.

“I will establish a connection with you. When I can no longer control myself, I may choose to end your life. Ending the life of an uninformed adventurer like you, seeking to uncover the truth of Hanth Island’s legend, would bring me greater satisfaction than harming ordinary people. I won’t feel as regretful or guilty.”

The ice-blue-eyed Demon gazed at the Sacred Emblem of Life once more, bowed its head, and expressed remorse.

“Oh, merciful Mother, I implore your mercy for my transgressions. I should not have harbored malevolent intentions…”

The corners of Lumian’s mouth twitched, and his expression darkened.

Did you genuinely intend to harm me?

He couldn’t afford to let his guard down for a moment when dealing with Demons. Vigilance was paramount, even if it was a Demon professing allegiance to Earth Mother!

Moreover, a seemingly innocuous conversation could clandestinely plant a time bomb. Any other adventurer would have fallen victim to it. Truly befitting the Criminal pathway, known for its high IQ crimes…

Cold, calculating, and overtly malicious…

After the ice-blue-eyed Demon, self-identified as Naboredisley, concluded its repentance, Lumian feigned a nonchalant smile and remarked,

“If you truly cannot control yourself and desire to take a life, target pirates. It aligns with a sense of justice.”

The ice-blue-eyed Demon’s expression darkened as it retorted, “This is my prison. I cannot depart until I have atoned. If any pirates enter Port Hanth, I will make them vanish into the forest outside the city.”

Lumian nodded and redirected the conversation.

“The Love Incantation I mentioned earlier was the name you brought up. The Demon who proposed a deal with me also identified itself with that name.”

The gray-haired, ice-blue-eyed Demon remained silent, gazing at the Sacred Emblem of Life for an extended period.

Rather than detecting anger and animosity, Lumian sensed surprise and bewilderment.

What… It can’t pinpoint the Demon’s true identity either? Is there no direct connection between the two parties? Lumian pondered inwardly.

After a while, the ice-blue-eyed Demon, self-dubbed Naboredisley, spoke,

“According to you, the Love Incantation has been clandestinely circulating for many years, yet I’ve never established a connection with anyone outside Hanth Island.”

“I’m puzzled by that too. Could it be that someone can intercept the direction of the name? Is it conceivable to assume your identity in the future?” Lumian feigned curiosity as an adventurer.

He believed that, based on Madam Magician’s words, Mr. Fool could accomplish such a feat. Amon was capable of it once too. Whether any Demon could do it remained unknown for now.

The ice-blue-eyed Demon fell silent once more. After a few seconds, it spoke with a deep voice,

“Foreigner, you’ve inquired enough. Let’s conclude it here. Otherwise, you may meet your end unknowingly.”

Clad in a formal black suit, the Demon self-dubbed Naboredisley slowly rose. It positioned its feet apart, raised its hands adorned with black leather gloves, and whispered,

“Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!”

Then, it turned around, picked up its cane, and shuffled towards the cathedral’s door, bathed in the midday sun.

Lumian scrutinized the ice-blue-eyed Demon, realizing it wasn't tall and appeared rather thin. It emitted a withered and feeble aura, resembling that of an elderly ordinary human. It hardly resembled a terrifying and mighty Demon.

Observing closely, Lumian sensed a dark, blatant malice expanding and contracting beneath the thin human skin and aged flesh. The Demon struggled to maintain composure, refraining from tearing through its fragile facade.

The frightening inner core sharply contrasted with its frail appearance, yet the overall aura seemed feeble and commonplace.

This is reminiscent of Ludwig… One is a child concealing an unknown monster beneath the skin, while the other is a pitch-black Demon concealed within an old man's body… Lumian exerted great effort to refrain from fixating on scrutinizing the ice-blue-eyed Demon's luck.

The gray-haired elder in black leather gloves, wielding a cane, slowly departed from the cathedral.

Lumian wasn't in a rush to return to the Berries. He remained seated in the first row, contemplating the local Demon legends, which had recently become clearer yet were shrouded in numerous mysteries.

Suddenly, from the corner of his eye, he spotted a brown clergyman's uniform.

This was the attire of a clergyman from the Church of Earth Mother.

Lumian looked up and saw a middle-aged man with well-

defined facial features and thick eyebrows. He noticed a pair of bloodshot, ice-blue eyes filled with pain.

Ice-blue eyes?

Dammit! Lumian's hair stood on end as he cursed inwardly.

The ice-blue-eyed clergyman sat beside Lumian, where the Demon had been.

He smiled warmly and said, "Don't provoke Boselli or attempt his suggestions. His self-control diminishes with age."

"Boselli? Are you referring to the old gentleman with ice-blue eyes?" Lumian feigned ignorance.

"Yes." The ice-blue-eyed clergyman nodded slightly.

Lumian pondered for a moment and grinned.

"What about you? How's your self-control?"

“I’m much better than him. I lose control only once every few years,” the ice-blue-eyed clergyman replied candidly.

Is he admitting that he’s also a Demon? I’m not in Earth Mother’s cathedral, but a Devil family’s dining room… Lumian felt a chill and couldn’t help but criticize.

Maintaining a composed smile, he said, “Are you acquainted with him? Are you from the same family?”

The ice-blue-eyed clergyman reflected for a moment and replied, “We’re all born in the Port Hanth Cloister.”

Children born in a cloister? The description made Lumian uneasy.

In other Churches, having a child in a cloister was a grave matter, deviating from the teachings of the deity, a symptom of succumbing to carnal desires and blaspheming faith.

Lumian pondered for a moment before reaching a realization.

This was the Church of Earth Mother. The more nuns and monks had children in the cloister, the more aligned with the doctrine!

He immediately understood why the ice-blue-eyed clergyman and Boselli were born in the cloister.

It would conceal their origins and identities well, preventing them from implicating ordinary families.

This shattered Lumian’s previous deductions about the local Demons.

Demons didn’t need to vanish to conceal their “corpses.” The Church of Earth Mother would assist in concealing them. For instance, replacing genuine holy water with distilled water during a wake and later providing new identities and legal origins.

My earlier deduction was based on the assumption that the Church of Earth Mother and the local Demons weren’t allies. No wonder there are so many errors… This is a factor I need to be mindful of when crafting conspiracies in the future. If I’m mistaken, any subsequent clever arrangements will lose their significance… It seems the Church of Earth Mother is directly offering protection to these ice-blue-eyed Demons, both resisting restrictions and cooperating to shield them? Lumian reflected on his investigations over the past two days.

This introspection couldn’t enable him to digest the potion completely, but he felt it was more beneficial than a complete digestion.

Lumian gazed at the clergyman with ice-blue eyes and inquired with a smile, “Could it be that you’re also using the name Boselli mentioned just now?”

The ice-blue-eyed clergyman responded with a warm smile.

“Yes, my name is also Naboredisley.”

Without waiting for Lumian to probe further, it continued, “I don’t know your background, but you can report Hanth Island to the other orthodox Churches. I believe they will advise you against delving into the truth of the Demon legends.

“Just as Boselli mentioned, Foreigner, let’s conclude this here. Leave Hanth Island.”

Lumian nodded, stood up, and departed from the cathedral.

Under the bright sunlight, he strolled along the street, his mind filled with pairs of icy-blue eyes and the name Naboredisley. He felt a little disoriented.

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Chapter 627 - 627 Treatment Plan?

How many Demons inhabit this island?

Are they all part of the same family with ice-blue eyes?

As expected of the Mother of All Things. Even a Demon can be Her child. A whole nest of them!

…

As thoughts swirled in Lumian's mind, accompanied by those piercing ice-blue eyes and the name Naboredisley, he felt that his previous investigations and speculations were completely off course.

The complexity and mystery surrounding the legend of the Demons on Hanth Island surpassed his initial imagination.

No, there are still gains and benefits…

Speculation involves bold assumptions and careful confirmation. It's normal for initial assumptions to be overturned. The elimination method is a crucial deduction tool…

How can there be unsolved cases that are guessed completely correct from the beginning? The crucial aspect lies in consistently refuting the incorrect path through falsification and integrating new information acquired during the investigation to uncover the right one…

Heh heh, if I were to take the Reader pathway, it should be relatively straightforward for me to act the role of a Detective. Discerning a conspiracy stands out as one of the primary duties of a Detective…

Lumian reassured himself, disentangling from the impact of the two ice-blue-eyed Demons. He regained his clarity and rationality, no longer feeling befuddled and disoriented.

Under the blistering sunlight, he swiftly identified an issue.

In the scene I witnessed through the Mystery Prying Glasses, the blood-colored Demon was pulled by an invisible force, but there was only one invisible force, and only a pair of ice-blue eyes gazed at me…

There's only one ice-blue-eyed Demon closely linked to the blood-colored Demon, and that's the elder Boselli who repented before the Sacred Emblem of

Life. The others, including the ice-blue-eyed clergyman, are its descendants. Could they be the offspring it left behind with the nuns when it used the Hanth Island's cloister to 'restore its youth' and obtain a new identity?

However, when the ice-blue-eyed clergyman mentioned Boselli, it didn't sound like it was referring to its father, grandfather, or ancestor. It was as if it was discussing a friend with whom it didn't share an amicable relationship…

Moreover, it also identifies itself as Naboredisley…

Could this be a family name? A significant family name among the Abyss Demons?

Puzzled, Lumian boarded the Berries and returned to his first-class suite.

At that moment, Lugano and Ludwig were relishing a lavish lunch.

Upon spotting Lumian, the Doctor grinned sheepishly and said, "I thought you'd be indulging in the local delights on the island, so I didn't wait for you."

Lumian sat down and grabbed a wheat-flavored bun. As he chewed, he asked thoughtfully,

"What do you know about the abilities of the Planter pathway?"

Lugano hesitated for a moment before truthfully responding, "Sequence 9 Planter significantly boosts my strength. I can predict the weather to a certain extent by observing clouds, wind, and other natural phenomena. I'm adept at identifying seeds and nurturing them. Farming tools suit me more than knives and guns.

"Sequence 8 Doctor's primary abilities revolve around healing. They can discern the patient's specific situation through Spirit Vision. They possess outstanding surgical skills, such as suturing severed limbs and transplanting internal organs. Additionally, we gain Beyonder abilities like Evil Ailment Treatment, Trauma Treatment, Soul Suture, and Life-Giving.

"As far as I know, the next Sequence is called Harvest Priest. It mainly focuses on promoting the reproduction and growth of creatures and bringing about a bumper harvest with Beyonder powers…"

Upon hearing this, Lumian suddenly interrupted Lugano.

"Soul Suture?

"How is this implemented?"

Lugano grinned sheepishly and said, "I haven't really used this ability yet. It's used to treat soul injuries. As you know, some superpowers can attack the soul, making it difficult for it to heal on its own. At this moment, as long as the injured let go of their bodies and minds and don't resist, I can carry out a soul-level surgery to stitch up the corresponding wound."

Lumian's concern wasn't about stitching up a soul; it was another matter that provided him with a fresh perspective on the Demon legends of Hanth Island.

He downed the pre-meal bun and took a sip of the golden liqueur. After a moment of contemplation, he inquired, "Since you can suture souls, from a different standpoint, can you also sever souls?"

Lugano fell silent. After ten to twenty seconds, he responded, "Theoretically, yes, but it requires the corresponding person to completely open up their body and mind, leaving their soul unprotected. It would be even more effective if their physical body doesn't exist."

The Doctor hesitated for a moment before adding, "This can serve as an attack on the soul, but it could also be a treatment method. If a patient's soul is corrupted by a curse, they can address it by severing the depravity and allowing their soul to gradually heal."

Upon hearing this, Lumian smiled and applauded softly.

"Well said. Well said."

Lugano, being thick-skinned, couldn't help but feel a bit embarrassed by the praise. He blurted out, "That's just my speculation. I haven't tested it yet."

Lumian ignored him and proceeded to emulate what Ludwig had done. He forked a lamb chop onto his plate and began cutting with determination.

Simultaneously, the initial sensations when he faced the onslaught of the ice-blue-eyed Demon resurfaced in Lumian's mind.

He witnessed diverse versions of himself—a version brimming with hatred, another immersed in pain, one engrossed in lust, and another consumed by various desires and emotions…

As Lugano detailed the process of suturing and soul-severing, an idea sparked in Lumian's mind.

What if the High-Sequence abilities of the Planter pathway were employed to excise different aspects of the soul corresponding to various desires?

Could there truly be just one ice-blue-eyed Demon on Hanth Island, but its soul had been partitioned by the Saints and even Angels of the Church of Earth Mother, each becoming an individual? On a mystical level, they remain a single entity. Hence, is there only one invisible force closely tied to the blood-colored Demon?

The question now is—why would the Church of Earth Mother undertake such an action?

Imposing restrictions or offering protection? Perhaps both?

Lumian swiftly linked this with the state of the blood-colored Demon. It consistently descended into the pitch-black sewage before being hoisted up by an unseen force.

Splitting the soul acted as a shield for the ice-blue Demon, preventing corruption from the power of the pitch-

black sewage?

Wait, could the ice-blue-eyed Demon be the untainted segment of the blood-colored Demon's soul? Is the Church of Earth Mother's approach based on deeming the entire body beyond salvation, but parts are still considered healthy? Is that why a healthy soul needs to be severed into different desires?

The forest sealing off the mysterious valley, pitch-black sewage, and the blood-colored Demon displayed characteristics of rebirth, growth, depravity, death, and rebirth again… The soul fragments of the blood-colored Demon were given new life, enabling them to utilize the cycle of rebirth, growth, aging, death, and rebirth again to resist the corruption spreading from their true bodies?

Simultaneously, relying on the existence of the healthy parts prevented the blood-colored Demon from sinking entirely?

Aging soul fragments are inherently more vulnerable to corruption from the main body, and newborns are the healthiest. This explains why the old Boselli and the ice-blue-

eyed clergyman are in different states…

Such a newborn possesses a Demon's potent soul, but its human body is exceedingly frail. Yes, it aligns with my observations of Boselli. Its feeble and aged body encases a potent soul teeming with malevolence… This… This method of sealing and rescuing aligns with the Church of Earth Mother's unique abilities…

With these revelations, Lumian felt enlightened. Only then did he realize that he had been continuously cutting the lamb chop's bones, producing a grinding sound.

Lugano pretended not to notice or hear anything, focusing on enjoying his meal. Ludwig paid no attention to such trivial matters, wholly absorbed in the delicacies.

Lumian withdrew his gaze and happily poured himself a glass of Paha red wine. The confusion, disorder, loss, and disappointment he had previously experienced dissipated significantly.

As he drank, he leisurely pondered, This hypothesis aligns most with the current details. Unfortunately, it can't be verified, nor do I dare to. And without verification and results, there's no feedback for the potion's digestion…

Forget it. The experience and lessons I gained this time are much more important than the digestion I can still attempt in the future.

Why does the Church of Earth Mother want to protect the blood-colored Demon? Moreover, since a healthy soul has been separated and given new life, why not completely destroy and purify the corrupted true form to eliminate any hidden dangers?

There's a high chance that this involves the world's deep secrets…

Is that blood-colored Demon the true and largest Naboredisley?

Was the one seeking a deal to slay Hanth Island's Demon descendant it? Can it, in turn, affect a few soul fragments, allowing me and a Mid-Sequence Beyonder like Franca to slay a true Demon?

The more Lumian contemplated, the more curious he became about the truth. However, he eventually restrained himself.

For Beyonders at his level, this matter was concluded. After leaving Hanth Island, he would report his gains and speculations to Madam Magician and consult the Tarot Club's Major Arcana card holders.

Lumian, putting aside his investigative thoughts, felt a sense of relief. He spent the rest of his time leisurely strolling through Port Hanth.

To his surprise, he realized that the Berserk Sea island city, far from the Feynapotter Kingdom, didn't have a genuine casino. There were no criminal industries like human trafficking. It was as clean as if it had been purified by the Eternal Blazing Sun Church.

After engaging in Fighting Evil and other card games throughout the afternoon, Lumian, with wins and losses not exceeding 1 gold risot, finally grasped the reason.

Unable to control themselves, the ice-blue-eyed Demons prioritized the malevolent wrongdoers, making them vanish into the forest outside the city.

As time—a century or two—elapsed, Port Hanth could be deemed a city bathed in sunlight.

Certainly, there were innocents among them, like Antonio Elias.

Late at night, in the first-class cabin suite of the Berries.

In his slumber, Lumian vaguely witnessed the land shrouded in sulfurous flames, and the blood-colored Demon sprawled within the pitch-black liquid.

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Chapter 628 - 628 Terrifying Dream

628 Terrifying Dream

Lumian vaguely noticed bubbles emerging from the pitch-black liquid enveloping most of the blood-colored Demon's body. The brownish-green hue of the bubbles resembled tree warts.

In an instant, the bubbles burst, reflecting brilliant colors as they merged with the pitch-black liquid.

For some reason, Lumian sensed that something was wrong. He wished to shut his eyes and avoid these details, but trapped in a dream, he had no control.

In the depths of the pitch-black liquid, a figure lurked. It raised its head slightly, gazing at the blood-colored Demon.

Moist brownish-green or light brown tree warts protruded from the figure's body, reminding Lumian of Susanna Mattise in her Fallen Tree Spirit state.

The distinction lay in Susanna Mattise's tree warts, branches, and flower buds growing from her body, melding with her original form. The figure's tree warts, however, seemed to pierce out flamboyantly from the flesh and internal organs, tainted with blood.

In his dream, Lumian instinctively raised his right hand, wiping the corners of his eyes. The back of his hand was stained red.

At some point, blood had flowed from his eyes, turning his vision a blurry red.

The figure's overall outline appeared in the blur.

As if grown on a brownish-green tree, pierced by branches, overrun by tree warts, and covered in flower buds, dripping with a viscous liquid.

A burning sensation engulfed Lumian's chest, prompting him to instinctively close his eyes in the dream.

Yet, he was a step too slow.

Bang!

Lumian's eyes exploded, flooding his mind with searing pain.

He jolted awake, curling up in agony. His hands instinctively reached for his eyes, encountering a flat, sticky, and moist substance. The scent of blood hung heavily in the air.

As an Ascetic accustomed to severe injuries, Lumian took several minutes to overcome the pain that threatened to render him unconscious.

Struggling to sit up, he opened his eyes, only to be met with absolute darkness.

No crimson moonlight, no outlines of furniture in the bedroom–he couldn't see a thing.

Lumian raised his hand once more, gently touching his eye sockets. Both eyeballs had deflated, shattered beyond repair.

Is it because I glimpsed something I shouldn't have? Lumian chuckled in self-deprecation.

It was a vision from a dream, something he never wished to witness.

Upon reflection, he realized that if Mr. Fool's seal hadn't triggered or Termiboros hadn't activated it, his eyes might not have been the only casualties.

Wiping the tip of his nose, Lumian felt moistness and caught the unmistakable scent of rust.

In a surprisingly good mood, he quipped, "Luckily, it seems what's flowing down is blood, not brain matter."

He rejoiced in surviving the ordeal.

Despite the tragic state of his head, Lumian's body remained relatively unharmed, albeit a bit drained.

Gripping the edge of the bed, Lumian pulled himself up. In a state of blindness and impaired smell, he relied on the Hunter's instinct, navigating through his turf with a mental map. Bypassing furniture, he reached the living room and knocked on the servant's door.

"Yes, what's the matter?" Startled, Lugano hastily opened the door, dressed in a cotton shirt and underpants that served as makeshift pajamas, fearing a repeat of the terrifying encounter with Father Montserrat.

Under the crimson moonlight, he saw Lumian's blood-streaked face and empty blood-red eyes filled with shattered fragments.

"Wh-what happened?" Lugano stammered, bewildered.

Who had beaten his employer to such a state?

Who could inflict such harm upon his employer?

Why not teleport away from this perilous situation?

Lumian calmly pointed at his eyes.

“Treat them.”

“Alright,” Lugano responded subconsciously, then added awkwardly, “With the eyeballs in such a state, there’s no way of treatment. We can only find a suitable transplant.”

Lumian, enduring the pain, calmly stated, “No need. Just stop the bleeding and ease the pain.”

“Alright.” Lugano didn’t dare argue, following his employer’s instructions. He extended his shimmering left palm.

Upon contact and a simple use of a scalpel, Lumian felt a refreshing sensation in his eyes. The pain became more bearable, though his vision remained absent.

“You can go back to sleep,” Lumian waved dismissively, as if his loss of vision was inconsequential. With one hand in his pocket, he strolled past the Dutanese textbook on the carpet, settled into a recliner, and rocked it gently.

Lugano watched in confusion and anxiety for a while before attempting to return to bed, unable to fall asleep.

When the morning sun bathed the sea’s edge, the Doctor abruptly rose from his bed, deciding to grab a cup of coffee for a pick-me-up.

Upon leaving the room, he witnessed his employer in motion. Lumian’s green eyes sparkled, showing no signs of injury.

“Y-you’re alright?” Lugano was bewildered.

Lumian responded with a radiant smile, “That’s right.”

“…” Lugano was momentarily speechless.

How did my employer regenerate his eyeballs?

What kind of monster is this…

Is my role as his doctor merely to stop the bleeding and relieve the pain?

Lumian paid no heed to the servant’s psychological turmoil. He returned to the master bedroom, drew back the curtains, laid out the paper, and picked up a dark-black fountain pen.

I’m still not cautious enough… He sighed suddenly.

After heeding the ice-blue-eyed Demons’ warning and preparing to depart Hanth Island with the Berries, Lumian refrained from promptly writing to Madam Magician. He intended to observe the aftermath and wait until they were safely away from the port.

Unexpectedly, he had experienced such a terrifying and dangerous dream last night!

Initially suspecting that a Demon with ice-blue eyes had lost control and covertly influenced him, Lumian later speculated that he might have been subtly corrupted when he observed the blood-colored Demon and the pitch-black liquid through the Mystery Prying Glasses. The corruption lay dormant until he slept, manifesting fully in his dream.

Focusing his thoughts, he detailed everything witnessed and heard on Hanth Island. He replaced the name Naboredisley with the term Love Incantation.

Concluding the letter, Lumian wrote sincerely, “Perhaps I’ve encountered too many Demons recently. I feel like I’ve accumulated too much corruption and want to undergo treatment.”

Following that, Lumian conducted a ritual, summoning the doll messenger, and handed over the folded letter.

Accepting the letter with its right hand, the doll messenger covered its nose with its left palm and exclaimed, “You stepped on the world’s stinkiest thing!

“It stinks! It stinks!

“So dirty, so dirty!”

Swiftly grasping the letter between two fingers, the doll messenger vanished from the room.

Lumian waited briefly, but with no immediate response from Madam Magician, he decided to seek “treatment” elsewhere.

His destination was the cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother in Port Hanth, where he had visited the day before.

In the early morning, before the commencement of work, numerous believers gathered to listen to the preaching.

The preacher, the ice-blue-eyed clergyman from yesterday, expounded on a specific doctrine from the Holy Scripture. The concept that good and evil emanated from the same source, making them inseparable, was discussed. The sermon emphasized promoting good and suppressing evil.

Isn't it a little ironic to have this coming from a Demon like you? Lumian criticized and sat in the first row, listening casually.

He soon sensed the cathedral's vibrant vitality. Vegetation flourished, and mushrooms quietly sprouted. The scent of wheat and milk provided a calming atmosphere.

Unconsciously, Lumian realized that his life had gained intensity.

Each of the orthodox Churches has its own merits… he sighed silently.

After five to six minutes, the ice-blue-eyed clergyman concluded his preaching and approached Lumian with a warm smile.

"Young people who are willing to listen to advice always have a bright future.

"Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!"

Lumian observed the ice-blue-eyed clergyman retracting his raised hands. Is he hinting that it's "satisfied" that I stopped inquiring, exploring the forest, and searching for someone with ice-blue eyes since noon yesterday? Lumian considered, then looked at the clergyman before speaking.

"However, I had a terrifying dream last night and nearly died from it."

"What dream?" the ice-blue-eyed clergyman inquired warmly.

"Bishop, how should I address you?" Lumian asked, deferring from providing an immediate answer.

"Newman," the ice-blue-eyed clergyman announced its name in human society.

Lumian briefly recounted the blood-colored Demon in his dream, the pitch-black liquid, the blurry figure, and the branches and tree warts. He didn't delve into the final injuries he had suffered.

Bishop Newman listened quietly, gazing at Lumian for a few seconds.

"Are you willing to listen to my preaching?"

"Sure," Lumian agreed, curious about what the Ice-blue-eyed Demon had to say.

Newman flipped open the Holy Bible in his arms and spoke in a magnetic voice, "There are two Abysses. One is material, and the entrance is somewhere in the real world. The other is spiritual, and the entrance is deep in everyone's hearts.

"Sometimes, these two Abysses are separated, but most of the time, they're one.

"Good intentions and evil intentions come from the same source. It's inevitable for us to harbor evil thoughts like jealousy, hatred, destruction, greed, harm, and

arrogance. This is normal, not sinful.

“However, if we act on jealousy, hatred, greed, and arrogance, killing someone—our souls will gradually sink into the Abyss.

“When the time comes, one can only repent to the Mother, just like this.

“Merciful Mother, I have fallen into the Abyss of evil…”

Lumian listened quietly, grasping the essence of Bishop Newman’s words.

He acknowledged his mistake rooted in arrogance.

His earlier ventures, marked by a proactive approach and a lack of major problems, had led him to underestimate the concealed perils of high-level matters.

Standing up, Lumian raised his hands.

“I understand. Praise the Earth, praise the Mother of All Things!”

Newman nodded in satisfaction.

Returning to the Berries, Lumian read the reply, neatly folded into a square.

The letter contained spirit world coordinates and a concise directive: “Put an end to the matter on Hanth Island. Find time to seek treatment here.”

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Chapter 629 - 629 Corruption Removal

629 Corruption Removal

Madam Magician had not confirmed Lumian's speculation or delved into the deeper truth of Hanth Island's Demon legends. Lumian realized that this likely involved something he shouldn't pry into at the moment, or perhaps it was best not to understand until the accumulated corruption was eliminated.

Does "find time" imply that I can go whenever I want, disregarding the healer's schedule? Has Madam Magician foreseen that there won't be any issues? Lumian clutched the paper with the spirit world's coordinates and activated the black mark on his right shoulder.

His figure vanished from the Berries, navigating through the swirling chaos of colors. Occasionally, he felt inexplicable gazes and caught glimpses of indescribable forms.

After an unknown period, Lumian arrived at the location corresponding to the spirit world's coordinates and stepped out.

Before him stood a towering dome, illuminated by bright glass windows, with a mural depicting an epic scene.

In the midst of the hall, Lumian noticed a ball of sunlight.

Realization struck, prompting him to approach.

As he walked, the sunlight seemed to "spread" over, banishing shadows and darkness wherever it touched.

Soon, Lumian found himself enveloped in the sunlight.

Suddenly, it felt as if pure sunlight pierced through his skin, flesh, bones, and internal organs, exposing his soul.

Bits of illusory black gas were expelled from his soul by the sunlight, portraying various of Lumian's expressions–ferocious, pained, pleading, or intimidating.

Within seconds, the black gas dissipated under the purifying sunlight.

Simultaneously, Lumian felt his heart throb, and his left chest burned.

The blazing sunlight appeared to expel and purify everything in its path.

Amidst the agonizing heartache, Lumian sensed a change in the seal on his left chest, as if it was concealing itself, synchronizing with the sunlight.

However, before the attempt could fully succeed, the sunlight took the initiative to stop, receding like a tide into the depths of the hall.

Lumian swiftly returned to his usual state. Aside from the lingering discomfort in his heart, he felt significantly more at ease, as if he had suddenly caught the morning breeze and glimpsed the sunrise after an extended period of oppressive darkness.

His attention was drawn to a tall man in a simple white robe standing in the depths of the hall.

Observing the man, Lumian estimated him to be around 22 or 23 years old, towering at over two meters with an imposing aura. Despite his height, he exuded a calm temperament, and his brownish-yellow hair was neatly styled.

“The residual corruption on you has been cleared,” the tall man spoke in ancient Feysac.

Lumian had a suspicion and inquired, “Are you Mr. Sun?”

“Yes,” the young and tall man responded politely, devoid of arrogance or impatience.

He’s actually so young, but one can’t judge his age from his appearance… Lumian expressed his gratitude without delving into further questions.

Indicating towards the hall’s exit, Lumian asked, “Can I go out for a walk?”

Though unaware of his location, the murals suggested it was an essential cathedral of the Church of The Fool.

Lumian deduced that the Major Arcana card holder, The Sun, held a prominent position in the Church, or perhaps even the top position.

“Sure.” Major Arcana The Sun nodded.

Observing the Church of The Fool’s etiquette, Lumian pressed his hand to his chest and bowed before turning to exit the hall.

Once outside, the world teemed with life. Voices and figures surrounded him.

His initial thought: Did I accidentally step into a land of giants?

The shortest individuals on the street were at least 1.89 meters tall, with occasional figures reaching three to four meters. Clad in white shirts, black trench coats, and

half top hats, the men carried canes resembling spears, emitting an inexplicable sense of absurdity.

Even the ladies matched the towering height, mostly opting for flexibility in long pants rather than skirts.

Lumian surveyed the area, his gaze traversing doors exceeding four meters in height.

For a moment, he fell silent, feeling like a newborn in this peculiar environment.

However, this realization only briefly dampened his mood for exploration.

Of course, it was only a brief moment.

…

Trier, Trocadéro, at the entrance of a grape manor.

Franca clarified to the valet that her purpose was to visit Madame Clarice, and he stepped aside without guiding her. His stance implied that she knew the way and could proceed independently.

Undeterred, Franca followed the path ingrained in her memory, arriving at the circular pavilion nestled among the grape trees.

Demoness of Black Clarice, adorned in a black court dress, was seated there.

“Good morning, Your Excellency Clarice,” Franca greeted warmly, openly admiring her beautiful face and slightly sorrowful demeanor.

Demoness of Black Clarice nodded slightly and inquired, “Has there been progress in the Mirror People investigation?”

Franca, not in a rush to respond, met Clarice’s dark-gray eyes and remarked, “Is Browns not present?”

“She’s not my lady’s maid. She attends to her own matters,” Demoness of Black Clarice replied succinctly.

“Not at the Red House Café or the hunting ground beside the forest either,” Franca observed the air’s fragrance and chose to engage in conversation with the Demoness of Black.

“She has other matters to attend to,” Clarice evaded delving into Browns’ affairs.

Reluctantly, Franca recounted the details of the Minister of Industry, Moran Avigny’s situation, from the initial sensing of the Mirror World Fragment’s tremors after the play, substituting herself as the person involved.

Clarice remained silent, her eyes lowered in contemplation.

Franca didn't rush the Demoness of Black. Her gaze flickered between the deep gray of her eyes, the fairness of her delicate skin, the curves that stirred the soul, and the unnaturally alluring red lips.

She knew this wasn't a good idea, but she couldn't rein in her impulses. Her heart gradually heated up, and her thoughts got a bit muddled. Her mouth dried, forcing her to purse her lips intermittently.

Dammit! Why am I feeling this way right now? While humans as animals can be susceptible to instincts, I've always maintained composure during serious discussions and encounters with high-ranking figures. At most, I've held admiration… Could it be that the Demoness of Black is intentionally radiating her charm to draw me in? Or is there another explanation? Yes, the lingering corruption from the Demon incident must be affecting me! Though it's subtle and doesn't manifest in my daily life, it's making it difficult for me to control my desires in the presence of a high-ranking Demoness known for her feminine allure. As a result, I find myself slipping into an aroused state… Franca gritted her teeth, refusing to succumb to the temptations of desire.

Clarice looked up at her.

"Has it been too long since you've experienced pleasure?"

"Not since my last lover passed away," Franca replied truthfully, aware that the Demoness of Black referred to a specific kind of pleasure. She explained, "As I mentioned earlier, to get close to Moran Avigny's illegitimate daughter, I used a mystical item. Unfortunately, it had a side effect, leading to encounters with Demons and other evil entities for a transaction. I was somewhat affected."

Clarice's voice turned icy.

"Endurance is not a sustainable solution. Indulge yourself. Otherwise, the Demon pathway will become your nemesis."

The Demoness of Black's aura instantly shifted to a holy and dignified state, becoming inviolable.

Franca also sensed that she couldn't entertain lascivious thoughts about such a captivating beauty. Her desires gradually subsided, and her mind cleared, breaking free from her aroused state.

Clarice redirected the conversation.

"You aim to deal with Moran Avigny?"

"He should be a crucial Mirror Person. If we can capture him or channel his spirit, we should uncover most of the Mirror People hidden in Trier. Madame, I seek your assistance," Franca stated, laying out her thoughts.

She avoided mentioning that Moran Avigny shared Clarice's dark-gray eyes and instead presented a color photo.

Clarice nodded slightly and said, "You can now strategize your operation. I'll assist during crucial moments, but for most scenarios, you must rely on yourself and the factions under your control."

"No problem." Franca didn't conceal her excitement.

As she exited the vine-surrounded circular pavilion, Demoness of Black Clarice's dark-gray eyes turned cold as she rose slowly.

…

In a brightly lit bar, Lumian clinked a beer glass, larger than his head, against the nearly three-meter-tall "giant" opposite him and gulped down the golden liquor.

Wiping the corners of his mouth, he chuckled.

"So, this is the New City of Silver in the Bible."

From the sermons he had heard, Lumian knew that the New City of Silver served as the headquarters of the Church of The Fool, situated in the Sonia Sea. It had been established by the surviving humans rescued by Gehrman Sparrow from the cursed continent of the Forsaken Land of the Gods.

Unexpectedly, the surviving humans were towering figures, almost like giants!

"That's right. All the warriors here are ready to defend Mr. Fool's Church at all times!" the nearly three-meter-tall giant expressed with satisfaction. "You're not bad. You worship the Angel of Redemption and believe in Mr. Fool. Just these two points alone makes us brothers!"

He extended his right palm and slapped Lumian, nearly toppling him. It felt like a child encountering a brown bear's paw.

Lumian forced a smile and inquired, "Can you share more about the Angel of Redemption's deeds in the Forsaken Land of the Gods?"

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Chapter 630 - 630 Day Tour

630 Day Tour

The nearly three-meter-tall giant expressed regret, “The six-member council mandates that we can’t discuss matters not mentioned in the Holy Bible. As a believer of Mr. Fool, you must be familiar with the sermons and official statements. I can’t share anything beyond that, just as I can’t claim to have personally seen the Angel of Redemption and received his assistance.”

Attempting to tap Lumian on the shoulder, the “giant” found Lumian deftly dodging the gesture.

“How should I address you?” Lumian, feigning reverence, inquired, not fully convinced.

The “giant” responded, “Livalie.

“A toast to the newborn of the City of Silver!”

Lumian raised his massive beer glass, clinking it against the other party’s. Then, he downed the remaining golden liquid.

Rubbing his bulging stomach, he gestured towards the washroom, indicating his need to relieve himself.

The beer in the New City of Silver wasn’t extraordinary, but the cups were simply too large. After two glasses, Lumian’s physique and alcohol tolerance reached their limit.

He wasn’t drunk; he was just stuffed!

Entering the washroom, Lumian stood before one of the urinals, unbuckling his belt and narrowing his eyes.

Amidst the splashing sounds, a “giant” more than three meters tall entered and chose the urinal beside him.

Lumian subconsciously turned his head before slowly retracting his gaze.

Dazed, he stared at the wall in front of him until the pressure in his abdomen completely subsided. Only then did he leave the washroom, returning to his usual seat at the bar counter.

Livalie had already ordered a new glass of beer for Lumian. It was dark-black but not murky. Swirling in the mug, it revealed a hint of brown.

“Try it. It’s a specialty of the New City of Silver, Black-Faced Beer!” the “giant,” firmly believing himself to be human, introduced enthusiastically.

“Black-Faced Beer?” Lumian, holding the beer glass larger than his head, asked in puzzlement.

Livalie suddenly felt a pang of sadness.

“The Forsaken Land of the Gods lacked the sun and fertile soil. Only Black-Faced Grass grew. It was our staple, sustaining generations of City of Silver residents. Though always insufficient, it was better than nothing.

“Back then, brewing alcohol from Black-Faced Grass was impossible. It was too, too extravagant.

“Heh heh, now with food, meat, and milk in abundance, I’ve grown taller again. I’m 30 centimeters taller than before.”

“Can Black-Faced Grass still be planted in the New City of Silver? Grown underground?” Although Lumian wasn’t a Planter, having grown up in the countryside, he knew that in extreme environments, those plants might not survive under normal circumstances.

Livalie smiled.

“It can be planted! It can grow in any environment. Of course, we’ve had someone modify the Black-Faced Grass seeds to make them more suitable for the current conditions. Its texture is actually quite different from before. Even more flavorful. Give it a try. You won’t find this beer elsewhere. We don’t grow much ourselves. It’s mainly to remember the past.”

Lumian raised the beer glass to his lips with interest, taking a large gulp.

The first thing he tasted was the normal, faint fragrance of wheat. Then, he experienced a refreshing grass-like stimulation in the sweet alcohol. Finally, a subtle milky taste filled his mouth.

“Not bad. It’s a special and wonderful experience.” Lumian was generous with his praise.

Curious, he inquired, “Do you have any liquor brewed from Black-Faced Grass?”

Livalie’s expression darkened as he shook his head.

“We in the New City of Silver consider alcoholism debased, indulgent, and a waste of food. That’s why we reject liquor.”

At this point, he paused.

“Besides, Black-Faced Grass doesn’t seem suitable for brewing. Even if it’s made into beer, drinking too much will cause hallucinations. I can only handle three glasses at a time.”

Minor toxicity? In the Forsaken Land of the Gods, people from the New City of Silver relied on eating this plant to survive generation after generation. It wasn’t easy… Lumian recalled his sister’s occasional jokes and smirked.

“If you drink too much, will you see a group of little people dancing?”

Livalie pondered for a moment and replied, “No, hallucinations are usually different. Some see their wives slapping them, some hear the cries of their deceased relatives, and some find a baby lying by the roadside wailing…”

Lumian couldn’t bear to hear about matters involving babies crying, so he lost interest and focused on the taste of the Black-Faced Beer.

After finishing the glass, he made another trip to the washroom before leaving the bar. He planned to take advantage of the afternoon sun to stroll around New Silver City and teleport back to the Berries docked at Port Hanth in the evening.

In the sparsely populated yet unusually towering buildings, half-giants roamed. Every now and then, one or two “giants” standing over three meters tall could be spotted. Those below 1.8 meters were a rarity, except for those with child-like faces.

Lumian’s stature barely met the criteria, and his eyes quickly scanned the surroundings.

He observed turquoise vines snaking up the outer walls of certain houses. On these vines, numerous soft, large, white, and plump mushrooms thrived.

Mushrooms? Since when did vines yield mushrooms? Lumian furrowed his brow, questioning his botanical knowledge.

It occurred to him that this might be a unique plant brought from the Forsaken Land of the Gods by the New City of Silver, bringing a sense of relief.

He approached a roadside stall and glanced up.

“You’re selling milk. Why don’t I see a bucket of milk?”

The vendor, standing at 2.56 meters with slightly grayish-blue skin, smiled genuinely and replied, “The house behind me is mine. Want some milk?”

“I’ll take a glass.” Lumian, having already inquired, had no qualms about purchasing a glass of milk; money was not an issue.

Though verl d'or and gold risot weren't official currency in the New City of Silver, gold held value universally.

The vendor cheerfully grabbed a cup, turned around, and headed to his two-story house. He reached out and plucked a soft, white mushroom.

He aimed the mushroom at the cup and squeezed it.

Milk-white liquid gushed out, rapidly filling the cup.

Lumian's jaw dropped, confusion once again clouding his eyes.

This is what you guys call milk?

"It's ready." The half-giant vendor handed the milk to Lumian.

Lumian instinctively took it and asked in bewilderment, "Are those mushrooms?"

"Yes, milk mushrooms," the half-giant vendor replied earnestly.

You call that mushrooms? Lumian paid in a daze and left the stall with a cup in hand.

He couldn't recall how much he paid or even why he started the conversation about buying milk.

After walking more than ten meters, he brought the cup to his lips and took a sip.

It tasted like milk!

Lumian finished the glass with a frown, finding nothing peculiar.

Yet, the liquid came from mushrooms!

Just consider it a unique plant… Just consider it a unique plant… Lumian muttered, deciding not to try it again.

He feared that drinking too much might turn him into a milk producer himself!

He continued to wander aimlessly along streets twice as wide as those in Port Hanth.

Suddenly, another "half-giant" with slightly grayish-blue skin approached, holding a thick book and speaking with unusual enthusiasm, "My friend, would you be interested in hearing me introduce our beacon and savior…"

Lumian smiled, pressed his hand to his chest, and bowed.

"Praise The Fool!"

“Ah, a brother.” The half-giant was both disappointed and delighted.

The two of them conversed in ancient Feysac, but Lumian had overheard New City of Silver residents occasionally speaking Jotun, a language that could stir supernatural powers.

“Are there usually foreigners here?” Lumian asked casually.

The half-giant smiled and replied, “We often have foreigners visiting, exploring, and sightseeing. In the early years, some chose to settle here, but most eventually moved away. Living with us proved challenging for them. Heh heh, we’re too tall and not well-versed in the pleasures of life.”

With that, the half-giant took something from his pocket and handed it to Lumian.

“I’m pleased to have you as a guest in the New City of Silver. Try our locally made candy.”

It was a candy wrapped in thin blue-white paper.

Lumian didn’t hesitate. He took it, tore off the wrapping, and popped the white candy into his mouth.

The rich milky aroma and smooth sweetness quickly unfolded on his tongue, creating a delightful experience.

Milk flavor… Lumian’s curiosity sparked as he inquired with a peculiar expression, “Is this milk candy?”

“Yes,” the proselytizing half-giant replied with a smile.

“What kind of milk did you use?” Lumian hadn’t anticipated ever asking such a question.

The half-giant replied naturally, “Milk from the milk mushrooms.”

“…” Lumian held the milk candy in his mouth, torn between spitting it out or swallowing it.

He sensed the genuine warmth and enthusiasm when the other party shared the milk candy.

As time passed, Lumian witnessed mushrooms with a cooked meat fragrance, mushrooms smelling like fish, and various peculiar mushrooms.

His gaze turned lost as he observed the half-giants and giants joyfully sharing their food.

Unconsciously, he arrived at a corner of the New City of Silver.

A towering building stood there.

It was split into two sections. On the left, a spire tower; on the right, a domed tower. The outer wall, standing 30 to 40 meters tall, was a grayish-white hue.

The Twin Towers? According to Livalie, the spire houses the library and other public facilities, while the domed tower serves as the council office for the ruling six-member council of the New City of Silver… There must be Sealed Artifacts and formidable individuals in such a place… Lumian stood nearby, examining the imposing structure before him.

His eyes moved across the domed tower and noticed black plants resembling hair growing from the cracks near the ground. They hung there, swaying occasionally in the wind.

Lumian diverted his attention and headed towards the spire, eager to explore the books passed down in the New City of Silver, a human settlement existing in the Forsaken Land of the Gods for thousands of years.

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Chapter 631 - 631 Devilogy

631 Devilogy

631 Devilogy

Guided by the signs on the wall, he ascended to the third floor, revealing rows of imposing bookshelves.

The custodian of the library, an elderly man draped in a linen robe, oversaw the space.

Even seated, he matched Lumian's height, and his slightly gray skin bore the marks of age.

Engrossed in a goatskin-bound book, the library administrator paid no heed to Lumian's entrance, his gaze firmly fixed on the text.

Lumian, not rushing to seek permission for his exploration, entered the library and followed the guidelines posted on each row of bookshelves leading to the section housing mythical books.

He ran his finger over the weathered leather-bound book and another with freshly copied pages, choosing a tome that chronicled creation myths.

Before the bookshelf, Lumian casually flipped through its pages, only to stuff the book back.

He couldn't comprehend it!

The words were in Jotun!

This ancient language, associated with the Beyonder race of giants, possessed the ability to manipulate the forces of nature. Ranked alongside Dragonese, Elvish, and ancient Hermes, Jotun held significant importance in mysticism.

Although Lumian had mastered ancient Hermes and Hermes, Jotun remained a language he recognized but hadn't fully mastered. He could barely decipher the title of the ancient book but couldn't comprehend its contents.

A sweep of his gaze revealed a corresponding copy of the ancient book, this time written in ancient Feysac—a human language devoid of supernatural influence.

Joy surged within Lumian as he retrieved the soft-covered book and settled into the reading area near the window.

Throughout the entire process, no one intervened or issued a warning.

<nulli>This library is entirely open to everyone. Even those not residing in the New City of Silver can peruse its contents, but borrowing seems to be off the table? Or perhaps, the knowledge on this level isn't deemed confidential, Lumian mused, maintaining a steady pace.

He strolled past the section dedicated to Beyonder creatures, and his keen eyes snagged a book titled "Devilology."

<nulli>Devilology… Recalling recent encounters, Lumian snagged the corresponding copy.

In the reading area, he chose a spot shielded from direct sunlight yet bathed in ample illumination. Seated, he delved into the pages of "Devilology."

As he read, Lumian's eyes widened, and his mouth hung slightly ajar.

Each piece of information was invaluable!

For those potentially facing Beyonders of the Devil pathway in combat, the value of this book rivaled that of a potent Grade 2 Sealed Artifact or its corresponding mystical item.

<nulli>Moreover, how did the New City of Silver come by such knowledge? It's improbable they could compile creature illustrations without dispatching hundreds of Devils… Could it be that the half-

giants and giants here are Devil Hunters? Perhaps, in ancient times, when Devils were more active, they shared information with other factions? Lumian grew more alarmed as he read on.

Midway through, he massaged his throbbing temples, sensing a rapid depletion of his spirituality.

Lumian temporarily closed "Devilology," intending to explore the creation myths of the New City of Silver and take a well-deserved break.

From the very outset, the creation myth read:

"The omnipotent and omniscient god created everything before slipping into a profound slumber.

"Among the mythical races He brought into being, Giant King Aurmir, Dragon of Imagination Ankewelt, Elf King Soniathrym, Vampire Ancestor Lilith, Devil King Farbauti, Phoenix Ancestor Gregrace, Mutant King Kvastir, and King of Demonic Wolves Flegrea emerged as potent and crazy beings. They partitioned the authority left by the Lord, transforming into ancient deities governing the sky, land, sea, reality, the spirit world, and the astral realm…"

Abruptly, a dull-skinned, slightly gray finger tapped a specific spot on the page.

An aged, raspy voice echoed.

“Do not utter this name in any Beyonder language.”

Lumian looked up, surprised to find the library administrator, previously immersed in his books, standing beside him seemingly out of nowhere.

As a Hunter, Lumian remained oblivious!

Partly due to the lingering dizziness from reading “Devilology,” it showcased the library administrator’s proficiency in concealing both breath and movement, given his towering stature of more than three meters.

Lumian redirected his attention to the name indicated by the library administrator.

“Devil Monarch Farbauti.”

Without awaiting Lumian’s inquiry, the library administrator, bearing giant-like traits, shifted his finger a few centimeters and remarked, “It’s advisable to avoid pronouncing this name in any Beyonder language as well.”

Lumian followed the motion of the finger, silently noting the corresponding name in his mind.

“Vampire Ancestor Lilith.”

“Why am I not allowed to read about it?” Lumian expressed his ignorance without reservation.

The library administrator spoke in a deep voice, “The Devil Monarch is still alive. This formidable ancient deity remains among the living.

“And the Vampire Ancestor is suspected to be alive as well. In recent times, an individual in the city experienced disturbances after uttering the name ‘Lilith’ in Jotun. Although their life wasn’t at risk, they endured prolonged suffering.”

<nulli>Ancient deities? Entities that once governed the world before the Ancient Sun God’s era? Lumian recalled fragments of his limited knowledge and inquired thoughtfully, “Did the Ancient Sun God rescue humanity from the dominion of these ancient deities?”

Lumian read the description:

“The omnipotent and omniscient god stirred from slumber, rising from the earth to vanquish the ancient deities and reclaim His authorities.

“Note: In the present era, the omnipotent and omniscient god is also known as the Ancient Sun God…”

<nulli>Indeed… Among the eight ancient deities, Devil Monarch Farbauti is still alive, Vampire Ancestor Lilith is suspected to be alive, and the rest have perished? Giant King Aurmir… Why does that name sound familiar? Ah, the provincial capital renowned for its red wine and champagne. What ties does it share with the Giant King? Lumian cautiously inquired, “Can these two names be pronounced in ordinary human language?”

“The Vampire Ancestor’s is acceptable, but it’s advisable to refrain from attempting the Devil Monarch’s. You must exercise caution even in writing it,” responded the colossal library administrator. “We are uncertain if the Devil Monarch possesses any special abilities.”

<nulli>Exercise caution even in writing… Are all Demons like this? Yes, the deity of the Devil pathway remains alive, an ancient being since the Second Epoch… Lumian murmured, his heart stirred. He retrieved a note with the Love Incantation from his Traveler’s Bag.

“Have you encountered this name before? I came across a Demon who identified itself as this. Much like the others, it cannot be spoken or written, only thought.”

The library administrator accepted the note with a hand capable of engulfing Lumian’s head. His gaze swept over the name “Naboredisley.”

He lapsed into deep contemplation. After a minute or two, he silently retrieved a copy from a concealed location within the bookshelf.

The book’s title read: “A Summary of Rumors and Hearsay Before the Cataclysm (1)”

<nulli>What a simple name… Lumian observed as the library administrator opened the newly-acquired book, pointing at a particular line of text.

“As anticipated, it’s right here.”

Lumian fixed his gaze and read silently.

“After the Devil Monarch Farbauti led the Devils back to the Abyss, occasional rumors persisted of Demons enticing humans.

“The Demons operated under the following names:

“Beelbubli, Almos, Samael, Lilatan, and Naboredisley.

“A high-ranking Demon Hunter speculated that these names conceal the aliases of Devil Monarch Farbauti…”

<nulli>The Devil Monarch Farbauti’s alias? Lumian felt a jolt as a thin layer of sweat coated his back.

<nulli>Could Naboredisley be the Devil Monarch?

<nulli>The sealed blood-colored Demon was the Devil Monarch?

<nulli>No, it doesn't seem likely. If it were a genuine ancient deity, catching just a glimpse of His form wouldn't have resulted in my eyes exploding in a dream. I would have lost control immediately… Yes, perhaps Farbauti's pseudonym is among these names, but it doesn't necessarily mean Naboredisley is Him…
Lumian wiped his forehead with his right hand, forcing a smile as he addressed the library administrator, "As a foreigner, am I truly allowed to read these books? The knowledge they contain is exceedingly precious."

The library administrator responded calmly, "The Chief has already informed us that you are Mr. Fool's Blessed."

"Very well." Lumian found it amusing.

Apparently, not every foreigner could access this library.

The library administrator offered no further warnings. He took the book chronicling pre-Cataclysm rumors and departed from Lumian's vicinity.

Lumian continued to alternate between reading "Devilology" and "Creation Tales," taking breaks as needed.

As evening approached, he barely concluded both books and departed from the Twin Towers.

Releasing his compressed spirituality, Lumian teleported back to the Berries in Port Hanth.

Surveying the still-bright sky, Lumian confirmed that the investigation into Hanth Island's Demon legends had reached its conclusion.

The matter delved into complexities beyond his reach.

He no longer hesitated about his next steps and plans.

Since he hadn't fully digested the Conspirer potion, he resolved to head to West Balam and seek out Hisoka. There, he would hunt to digest the potion and complete the advancement ritual!

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Chapter 632 - 632 Conspiracy

632 Conspiracy

Late at night, in Trier, Angoul?ame de Fran?§ois sat in front of a small analyzer and a radio transceiver, attentively listening to the clicks and observing as a “translated” telegram was produced by a mechanical typewriter.

The signature above simply read Hidden Blade.

Having exchanged a few messages, Angoul?ame remained composed. He picked up the telegram and swiftly skimmed through its contents.

“Um, when you’re protecting high-ranking government officials and members of parliament daily, do you tail them even during personal moments like affairs or trips to the washroom?”

A wry smile formed on Angoul?ame’s face. He contemplated responding to Hidden Blade with, “What occupies your thoughts all day?” However, in the blink of an eye, his eyes narrowed as he tapped away on the mechanical typewriter.

“Tell me, what crime do you intend to commit? Which high-ranking government official or member of parliament is your target for assassination?”

Dammit! Franca, seated in the master bedroom of her apartment, squirmed uncomfortably.

Why did it feel like she was undergoing police interrogation?

She dryly chuckled to herself and replied on the mechanical typewriter.

“I’m just curious. Following them would be awkward, and not doing so might expose a security vulnerability easily exploitable by others.”

She refused to acknowledge any plans involving the Minister of Industry in the current government.

After a while, 007 sent a new telegram.

“I rarely undertake such missions. Initially, I dealt with Beyonder incidents and battled cultists. Later, I got promoted and no longer had to participate in daily protection operations.

“Based on my knowledge and limited experience, we have to follow the protectee wherever they go. If they choose to have an affair, at least one of us will discreetly

stand by the coat rack, keeping a watchful eye. If time allows, we'll investigate and confirm the identity and background of the target in advance. If the protectee enters the washroom, one of us waits by their side, guarding against potential threats from sewers, ventilation pipes, and shadows.

"However, there's an exception. If the protectee strongly requests and writes an exemption, we can respect their privacy. After all, we're not their parents obligated to protect their every move. If they perish, someone else will take their place. It's not easy to find a three-legged toad, but those aspiring to be high-ranking government officials and members of parliament can fill Avenue du Boulevard. Moreover, such officials and MPs don't often possess exceptional foresight and wisdom. What matters is the position they hold, not the individual.

"Very few high-ranking officials and MPs choose to write exemptions for privacy, but they tend to do so when discussing confidential matters with their team."

007, did you work overtime so much that you harbor resentment? Franca chuckled inwardly.

She felt that 007 wasn't as laid back as she would have liked. If it were the two members from Loen, they would likely say, "It's fine if most high-ranking officials who don't deal with real matters or MPs who only give speeches are dead. Even curly-haired baboons in their positions would perform better. At least the baboons wouldn't smack their heads to formulate policies or work for personal gain. They wouldn't boast about their wisdom and desire to show off. They'd simply enjoy bananas and play happily. That's the least harmful thing for the entire country."

Franca read 007's telegram again and turned to Jenna, who was sitting by the bed.

"The protective measures are tight, and there are no loopholes to exploit."

"Yes, that's the case with the Purifiers. The Machinery Hivemind and Bureau 8 should be similar."

Franca, Jenna, and Anthony had been gathering information for a while and had devised several plans, but they still found it unsafe and uncertain. Hence, they consulted 007, seeking clarification on the security situation around Moran Avigny.

Being a Cabinet Minister of a country, Moran Avigny was not an easy target for assassination.

Moreover, Franca and the others' primary goal wasn't assassination. Even if they considered it, they had to factor in the time required for spirit channeling, making it even more troublesome.

Listening to Franca's summary of 007's response, Jenna pondered for a moment and said, "If it were any other Demoness, they might choose to sacrifice their established legitimate identity by seducing Moran Avigny and pretending to be shy to make the minister get an exemption from the protectors. However, I don't think that's feasible. Moran Avigny is likely a Mirror Person, and Mirror People have a

close relationship with the Demoness pathway. They might be especially wary of a Demoness approaching them."

Franca had initially hesitated to involve Jenna in the operation against Moran Avigny because the Demoness of Black Clarice would secretly monitor and provide assistance at critical moments. It would be risky if she discovered Jenna using the Demoness pathway's abilities.

However, Jenna insisted on participating. Her reasoning was:

After Franca admitted to Clarice that she hadn't experienced pleasure for a long time, the Demoness of Black would likely suspect her relationship with Franca. After all, Franca had approached Browns Sauron under the guise of attending a female orgy.

Therefore, Jenna wanted to showcase a Vampire's abilities and combat style in front of the Demoness of Black. The mystical item she currently possessed would allow her to disguise herself effectively and maintain sufficient combat strength. The prerequisite was that she had to conceal the Arrow of the Bloodthirsty well and hide it under her clothes. As for Mirror Substitution, she could explain it away with Franca since Anthony had one too.

Franca had muttered, "Demonesses can also have pure love," but as she finished speaking, she awkwardly changed the topic and tacitly allowed Jenna to participate.

"Hmm." Franca, sitting cross-legged, nodded slightly and said, "Moran Avigny's strength is unknown. He might be very formidable. If we attempt to seduce him, we risk becoming his prey if he's vigilant, possibly even losing our lives. Sigh, I'd better write to Lumian and see what he thinks."

Franca chuckled self-deprecatingly.

"Ever since he left Trier, my brain seems to have gone on vacation."

She was mocking her past laziness, acknowledging that she often delegated the primary responsibility of thinking to Lumian while playing a supporting role.

Jenna chuckled and said, "You're really good at self-deprecating. That's what I admire most about you. You're open-minded and cheerful."

Franca chuckled.

"Teasing can liven up the atmosphere and foster closer relationships, but sometimes, if you can't gauge others' acceptance, teasing can easily turn into mockery. It's safer to make a self-deprecating remark."

As the two Demonesses conversed, a telegram clattered in. It was still from 007.

Franca's eyes lit up as she read the telegram.

The telegram read:

“Hidden Blade, if you disclose your target and provide sufficient reason, I might be able to offer assistance and discreetly cooperate with your actions.”

Wow, what a bro! Franca praised inwardly as her fingers swiftly moved over the mechanical typewriter.

“Here’s the deal. I currently possess ample evidence to believe that the Minister of Industry, Moran Avigny, is a Mirror Person who has infiltrated Trier and assumed the original owner’s identity for decades. Haha, I didn’t reveal this earlier because I needed to acquire crucial information from Moran Avigny. If he’s captured by you, I can’t guarantee that you’ll gain access to pertinent information, so I plan to take action myself.”

“Phew… There’s hope!” Franca turned around and joyfully raised her right index and middle fingers to Jenna.

Before long, 007 responded:

“Gather the results of your previous investigations and Moran Avigny’s information promptly and place it at the designated contact point. I’ll verify it first and find an opportune moment. Await my further instructions.”

Franca’s face lit up with joy. She pursed her lips and sent a brief telegram:

“It’s highly likely that a demigod of the Demoness Sect will be involved in this operation. Exercise caution.”

Jenna read it quietly and asked thoughtfully, “Are we still seeking Lumian’s opinion?”

“Yes,” Franca replied without hesitation. “As the saying goes, ‘three smelly cobblers are as good as Roselle.’ With more people brainstorming, we may uncover better solutions.”

“What kind of proverb is that? Why haven’t I heard it before…” Jenna suspected that Franca was making it up.

…

The crimson moon remained unseen, with only the stars casting a faint glow.

Seated in the Berries’ first-class suite, Lumian perused Dutanese textbooks when his messenger, Penitent Baynfel, abruptly materialized before him.

Baynfel, draped in a black clergyman’s robe, resembling a charred corpse, handed over the letter.

Lumian caught it, inhaling the lingering fragrance on the paper.

Franca's letter… Jenna even held and read it… Lumian made a casual judgment as he observed his messenger curiously.

He had a persistent feeling that Penitent Baynfel harbored many untold stories, but every attempt to engage in conversation was met with stoic silence.

After Baynfel traversed into the spirit world, Lumian unfolded the letter, reclined in his chair, and leisurely read.

With 007's help, this shouldn't be difficult. Lumian smiled suddenly and whispered to himself, If it doesn't work out, they can force the bait. Focus on the Mirror Person's wariness of Demonesses and the potential strength they possess to lure him. When Moran Avigny believes the target is a bait from the Demoness Sect, with a demigod hiding behind her, planning to take the poison pill and retreat to deliver a bomb, he'll find himself facing one or two Angels, three to five demigods… However, this way, Franca's Demoness Sect mission will be finished…

Lumian's thoughts raced as he crafted and discarded one plan after another.

Tomorrow, the Berries would depart from the Berserk Sea, sailing into the Southern Continent's waters.

When the time came, the ship wouldn't need to navigate complex twists and turns to avoid storms, maelstroms, and mystical phenomena. It could head directly for its destination port in West Balam.

Suddenly, Lumian sensed something and stood up.

Approaching the window, he peered out. In the darkness not far away, an ancient three-masted sailboat sailed silently.

There were no lights on the ship, and no one strolled on the deck.

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Chapter 633 - 633 West Balam

633 West Balam

Lumian had heard from Lugano that ships deviating from the safe sea route might mysteriously disappear. In a few years, they would occasionally appear at night– with no lights or people.

This seemed to be the case now.

In the past, Lumian might have teleported over out of curiosity, taking advantage of the three-masted sailboat's reentry into a safe sea route to assess its internal condition. However, after encountering the Demon legends on Hanth Island, he felt that less curiosity was better. As long as the uninhabited ship traveling in the darkness didn't exhibit signs of attack or an imminent danger, he could treat it as a unique spectacle of the Berserk Sea and simply observe.

The brown ship gradually distanced itself, leaving only the billowing sails in its wake.

Abruptly, Lumian, utilizing his exceptional vision, spotted a face silently staring out of an open hole in the cabin's uppermost window.

The face, shriveled and pale-white, clung tightly to the bones, devoid of flesh and blood. Flaxen-colored hair cascaded like withered weeds. The eyeballs were absent, leaving only a void of deep darkness.

It resembled the head of a desiccated corpse, yet its lips were surprisingly vibrant, as if recently adorned with lipstick.

Lumian instinctively sensed the face belonged to a woman. At least, she had been a woman when alive.

He refrained from raising his right hand for a warm greeting. Instead, he quietly observed as the ancient three-masted sailboat sailed beyond the safe sea route and into the dark night. The desiccated face, with blood-red lips and pitch-black eyes, blended into the darkness.

Only then did Lumian wave his hand and offer a faint smile.

"Goodbye! You won't be missed!"

He then helped Franca and the others to devise a plan to confront Moran Avigny. Ultimately, he opted to await further information from 007 before finalizing their strategy.

Conspirer wasn't a visionary, known for conjuring conspiracies out of thin air; they required substantial information as a foundation.

When Lumian awoke at dawn, the Berries emerged from the dense, death-carrying fog of the Berserk Sea.

Before him stretched a clear blue sea, bathed in the intense sunlight of the high sky.

The next day, the Berries bypassed Behrens Harbor at the northernmost tip of West Balam. Instead, they continued southwest, reaching Port Pylos by 4 p.m.

Situated in Matani, the port was under the rule of Admiral Querarill.

Originally a colony of the Intis Republic, Port Pylos saw Intis colonists withdraw after the war a few years ago. Subsequently, various factions from the Feynapotter Kingdom, maintaining a favorable relationship with Admiral Querarill, took control.

Lumian's target, Hisoka, was yet to surface in Port Pylos, but Lumian knew that the two pranks he had engaged in were in Matani. One occurred in Tizamo Town, at the outskirts of Port Pylos, closest to the forest, and the other in Devise, the southernmost gold mine city in Matani.

As Lumian unbuttoned the second button on his linen shirt, he remarked to Lugano in a self-deprecating tone,

"I feel like I'm shunned by winter and have been living in a scorching environment."

Having arrived in Port Santa during late autumn, which was relatively hot and sunny, Lumian moved on to Port Colla as Port Santa began to cool. His journey continued through what his sister called the tropics, devoid of winter and maintaining a temperature of at least around 20 degrees Celsius.

While Trier was already in midwinter, the Southern Continent was experiencing the height of summer.

This made Lumian's specially prepared black tweed coat and Gehrman-styled trench coat impractical.

"Because we've been traveling south all autumn," Lugano declared authoritatively on matters of weather and seasons.

Lumian donned a golden straw hat and strolled down the gangway to the port, hand in hand with Ludwig.

He boldly embodied the traits of the adventurer Louis Berry.

Initially, Lumian had contemplated altering his strategy, adopting a new identity to discreetly investigate the two pranks in Matani and uncover Hisoka without drawing attention. However, after Franca vividly detailed Hisoka's usual characteristics to Anthony Reid, the Hypnotist's profiling revealed an exceptionally aggressive trait, ranking among the top.

As a result, Lumian reconsidered and returned to his role of casting out "bait."

Yet, he couldn't shake the feeling that success was a slim possibility. The sea sacrificial ritual and Loki's survival had likely provided Hisoka with a comprehensive understanding of the factions backing him. April Fool's, with its former display of resources and energy, seemed ill-equipped to challenge the might of the Tarot Club. And Lumian wasn't solely relying on the Tarot Club for support.

If he were in Hisoka's shoes, Lumian would opt for patience. He'd wait a month or two, allowing the vengeful enemy to grow restless and make mistakes. When the formidable forces behind him could no longer guarantee protection, he'd launch a surprise attack.

For now, let's not devise a plan. I'll consider it when I find clues, Lumian muttered to himself. Leaving the port alongside a throng of passengers, he reached the public carriage stop.

Numerous rental carriages and pitch-black or vermilion coffins were parked nearby.

Coffins? Despite having read many travelog books on West Balam's customs, Lumian found it absurd to witness coffins lining the roadside.

Before the invasion of the Northern Continent, before East and West Balam's division, the Balam Empire revered Death—

the Emperor of the Underworld from the War of the Four Emperors. Thus, the locals valued and loved coffins, considering them objects that brought peace, tranquility, and the blessing of Death. When traveling, they would lie inside, carried by people or pulled by horses and single-horned goats.

Of course, this form of transportation was reserved for those of a certain wealth level. Ordinary people couldn't even afford lying in a coffin.

After a momentary daze, Lumian addressed Lugano and Ludwig with interest, "Do you want to take the coffin? I plan to give it a try."

"I-I'll pass," Lugano replied, finding the idea of lying in a coffin unsettling.

Ludwig shifted his attention to the nearby street vendors.

The aroma of corn and potatoes intertwined, enticing every passerby and prompting increased saliva production.

“How lame,” Lumian teased with a smile. Approaching the four locals with disheveled black hair and dark brown skin, he raised his right hand and pointed at the pitch-black coffin beneath the shade of a tree.

“How much?” Lugano inquired in fluent Dutanese before Lumian could.

“How much?” Lugano inquired in fluent Dutanese before Lumian could.

His linguistic talent was evident. Less than a month had passed since their departure from Port Santa to their arrival at Port Pylos, and he could already communicate with people in Dutanese. Of course, his proficiency was limited to basic words and short sentences.

A half-naked local in linen pants replied in Dutanese,

“Nearby, 40 coppet; faraway, 1 verl d’or.”

Recognizing the foreigner’s inquiry, he refrained from quoting the price in the local currency, Delexi, the Intisian term for copper coins.

Quite affordable. This coffin, carried by four people, should be considerably cheaper than the one carried by eight… Lumian mused, appreciating the direct use of verl d’or and coppet. It showcased the recent Intisian influence in the former colony, lost only a few years ago. Lumian’s grasp of Dutanese surpassed Lugano’s, thanks to the mid-level Language Comprehension charm he had used on the ship.

Learning Dutanese in this manner proved more efficient.

Regarding charm consumption, Lumian harbored no concerns. In his view, items served a purpose, and there was no concept of waste as long as they proved useful. He couldn’t align with those miserly individuals who hoarded their wealth throughout life, only for it to benefit others after their demise. If he urgently needed Language Comprehension charms, he could acquire them from the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society. If their gathering didn’t align with his schedule, teleporting to various cities in Lenburg would allow him to purchase them from the Church of Knowledge.

“Sure,” Lumian nodded at Lugano and said, “Let’s go to Hotel Orella.”

After Lugano paid 1 verl d’or, the local who had quoted the price lifted the thin coffin lid, revealing the interior covered with thick dark-red cloth and a stiff neck pillow.

Excitedly, Lumian removed his golden straw hat and lay down, immediately feeling a cooling sensation enveloping his body.

In the hot season, the coffin effectively dispelled the humidity.

Is it the coffin's wood or the sun-screening black paint, or perhaps the shade of the tree? It feels like stepping into a morgue in the summer—surprisingly comfortable… Lumian observed the thin coffin lid closing, witnessing the shadows rapidly expanding until they dominated his world.

Outside, the voices became muffled in his ears.

The coffin was lifted, swaying slightly as it moved forward.

Within Lumian's view, everything was dark, and his surroundings exuded a sinister, cold ambiance. For some reason, it felt like he was walking toward death, touching it.

Setting aside the psychological discomfort, it isn't bad. The only downside is the tendency to easily fall asleep… Lumian evaluated the mode of transportation in a good mood. It's unsuitable for mixed-gender rides, which could be more awkward. Heh heh, I wonder if the "romantic" Intisians have ever engaged in an affair under such circumstances?

Nearly half an hour later, the coffin halted in front of Hotel Orella.

Lumian stepped out, finding himself in front of a small, man-

made valley.

Rows of grayish-black stone rooms encircled the inner wall of the "deep valley" until reaching the bottom.

This was Port Pylos's most renowned Hotel Orella.

Originally belonging to a Balam royal family descendant, Orella Eggers, it had been constructed with the intent of approaching death. Later, it fell into the hands of Intis colonists.

Upon the Feynapotterians' arrival, they perceived it as a symbol of entering the earth and returning to the land, prompting its transformation into a sizable hotel.

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Chapter 634 - 634 Fresh Off The Boat

634 Fresh Off The Boat

In the well-lit lobby of Hotel Orella, aboveground, Lugano effortlessly balanced Ludwig, munching on a burrito, in one hand and clutched his suitcase in the other. His eyes darted around uneasily. From his adventurous beginnings to trailing Lumian south, he'd never lodged in a place proudly declaring itself a "hotel" instead of a "motel."

He'd only encountered Trier's renowned Grand Champs-élysée in newspapers and magazines, learning that its construction cost a whopping 21 million verl d'or. With 800 rooms and 65 functional halls, even the most basic accommodations demanded 12 verl d'or per day in the off-season. A stark contrast to Lugano's usual frugal 3.5 verl d'or weekly motel stays.

The bustling metropolis of Trier had left an indelible mark on Lugano, urging him to rise above and recommend himself to Lumian.

Accumulating wealth, obtaining potion ingredients, and advancing to Doctor became his priorities.

He aspired to join the ranks of high society!

Only when he became a Doctor did he grasp the vastness of the Beyonder world. He had barely scratched its surface.

The male receptionist, sporting curly black hair, dark brown skin, and a keen countenance, addressed Lugano in fluent Intisian.

"Would you prefer a suite or a standard room? Are you inclined towards a coffin bed or a conventional one?"

Lugano glanced at his employer.

Lumian toyed with a caramel-colored East Balam cigarette wrapped in roasted tobacco leaves, bringing it to his nose for a gentle sniff. He savored the blend of tobacco leaves, internal spices, and assorted herbs.

The aroma was mildly invigorating and redolent, tempting one to inhale deeply.

"A suite. Standard, and closer to ground level." Lumian had sampled rental coffins for transportation and had no plans to continue sleeping in them.

It wasn't a traumatic experience, but it did alter his perception of his surroundings. In case of an attack, it could impede his initial response.

Lugano sighed in relief upon hearing Lumian's decision and conveyed the employer's request to the male receptionist.

"8 verl d'or a day. Three days' payment in advance," the native male receptionist stated the price.

After Lugano completed the payment, the receptionist, with a nod to his colleagues, said obsequiously, "I'll escort you down."

Three mechanical elevators stood at the back of the hall. Lumian and his group entered the middle door, pulling the brass handle to B3.

Chains tightened, gears clamped, and various metal parts started to operate with resonating sounds. In the distance, it resembled the roar of a boiler, and white steam billowed out.

As the mechanical elevator descended, the native receptionist glanced at Ludwig and smiled at Lumian.

"Settling down in Port Pylos, are you?

"If you need info on local grammar schools and rentals in different communities, feel free to approach me."

In his view, anyone bringing a seven- or eight-year-old child to the Southern Continent was likely moving, not merely traveling. After all, the child was too young for perilous long-distance journeys.

Moving meant finding a house—renting or buying—and choosing a good school. These were all opportunities to make money!

At the mention of "school," Ludwig, munching on a roasted corn cob, suddenly stopped chewing, as if the food had lost its fragrance.

Lumian wasn't oblivious to the native receptionist's thoughts but didn't mind. Instead, he admired the man's shrewdness.

He grinned and remarked, "I'll take a look first. We haven't confirmed if we would stay in Port Pylos."

At that moment, the mechanical elevator halted at B3.

Entering the room on the right, with a stone fence on one side and the cold valley aisle on the other, Lumian addressed the native receptionist, "Do you know Tizamo Town?"

The native receptionist, aiding Lugano with the suitcase, slightly bent and led the way.

“I do. Many gentlemen head to Tizamo on weekends for forest hunting.

“There are secret temples and mausoleums left behind by former nobles in the forest. If you want to have fun, don’t venture too deep. The primitive tribes there are barbaric and savage.”

Lumian nodded, not probing further. Upon reaching Suite 7 and entering the living room, he casually tossed a verl d’or silver coin to the native receptionist.

“What’s your name?”

The receptionist, pleasantly surprised, responded, “You can call me Ron.”

Lumian chuckled.

“I might have to trouble you often in the future. For example, what’s the name of the nearest and better bars? Where is it?”

Ron touched the silver coin and smiled.

“It’s my honor to assist you.

“Head to the Man-Eating Flower Bar. Intisian is used for communication there. It’s on the street behind our hotel.”

Lumian instructed Lugano and left the room with Ron, waiting for one of the mechanical elevators.

Inside, a man with a deathly pale face and vacant eyes stood.

The man’s face was deathly pale, and his eyes were vacant. He wore a wrinkled shirt and pants.

Lumian glanced at him without a word.

Amidst the tightening of the chain and the relatively stable elevation, the mechanical lift returned to the ground.

Once the vacant-eyed man exited the lift and distanced himself from them, Ron leaned closer to Lumian and whispered, “I wanted to remind you to pretend not to see that customer.”

“Who is he?” Lumian asked casually.

Ron glanced around and lowered his voice.

“He resides in a suite at B18, a servant of Mr. Iveljsta.

“That gentleman’s servants don’t seem normal.”

Of course, it’s not normal. They are walking corpses… Lumian criticized.

He had already observed the servant and realized his fate was dark and that of a deceased.

Lumian wasn’t surprised to encounter such a situation in a country that once worshipped Death.

Having already seen the Blood Emperor’s afterimage, encountering a zombie was hardly shocking.

…

In the sweltering evening, Lumian bypassed the artificial deep valley where Hotel Orella stood and entered a street with an unpronounceable name. He spotted a bar adorned with an exaggerated Man-Eating Flower.

Donning a golden straw hat, he lit the East Balam cigarette purchased from the hotel lobby and placed it between his lips.

Cough, cough, cough!

Lumian quickly coughed, emitting white smoke from his nose.

His intention was to showcase his experience as an experienced adventurer by smoking East Balam cigarettes, but he hadn’t anticipated their potency. As someone who rarely smoked, he found it unbearable.

In Cordu, various cheap alcohols abounded, but cigarettes were scarce. Lumian had only witnessed Pons Bénet, Louis Lund, and a few others indulging in smoking.

After extinguishing the East Balam cigarette and tossing it into the trash can, Lumian entered the bar and skillfully approached the counter. He pulled up a barstool and settled in.

Sensing the lingering smoke in his mouth, he opted for something milder. He tapped the counter and spoke in Intisian, “A glass of kilju, the regular kind.”

“Ten licks,” replied the bartender, a local man in a white shirt and black vest, his Intisian tinged with a distinct accent.

Lumian settled the bill and awaited the bartender’s pour. He discreetly surveyed the area, noticing nobody paying him any heed except for a dozen wanted posters adorning the bar’s wall.

Thoughtfully accepting the amber-colored kilju, he adjusted his golden straw hat and addressed the bartender with a smile, “Do you know who I am?”

The bartender glanced at him and smiled back.

“Every now and then, a self-proclaimed renowned adventurer poses that question, but I’m sorry, I don’t know you.”

From the looks of it, the adventurer Louis Berry’s exploits in hunting the Demon Warlock are primarily known in the Fog Sea. My rising fame was tied to activities within the Church of Earth Mother’s sphere of influence. Louis Berry’s reputation waned upon entering the Berserk Sea, and few in West Balam are familiar with him… If Hisoka isn’t stationed at the docks every day, he likely doesn’t know about my arrival in Port Pylos… Lumian refrained from erupting in rage at the bartender’s words. He sipped his kilju, contemplating the situation.

Noticing Lumian’s silence, the bartender casually smiled and remarked, “You just arrived in the Southern Continent, right?”

“Yes, I left the Berserk Sea this morning.” Lumian seamlessly assumed the role of a regular at Ol’ Tavern, recounting his story with a smile. “Encountered a ghost ship in the Berserk Sea, danced with dried corpses under the moon, and repelled a Demon’s attack. Praise the Mother of All Things. You might never understand how magical and dangerous the Berserk Sea is…”

The bartender wiped the glass’s inner wall and interrupted Lumian.

“I know. After all, that’s where Death disappeared.”

“Where Death disappeared?” Lumian asked in surprise.

While he had speculated about the dangers of the Berserk Sea and abnormal weather being linked to a deity’s demise, he hadn’t expected such an easy answer.

The bartender regarded Lumian with an expression that implied, “You’re actually a rookie.”

“Have you never heard of the legend of treasures at sea?

“At the top is Death’s Key. It’s said that at the end of the Fourth Epoch, Death, who had lost the Pale-White War, stirred violent waves to obstruct the returning enemy to Balam, creating insurmountable obstacles that severed the Northern and Southern Continents. However, He ultimately didn’t return to His throne and vanished. Only those with the special key can find Him, discover the treasures He left behind, and gain His boon.”

The bartender’s tone was complicated.

Lumian fell silent.

He had embarked on the sea seeking revenge and held little interest in treasure legends. He hadn’t anticipated missing such crucial information.

Just then, the heavy wooden door of the bar creaked open.

The once-noisy bar hushed in an instant.

Sensing the shift in atmosphere, Lumian turned his body, fixing his gaze upon the door.

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Chapter 635 - 635 Man-Eating Flower

635 Man-Eating Flower

At the entrance of the Man-Eating Flower bar, a figure strode in.

A woman, neither towering nor petite, clad in a conservative, deep-black dress, caught everyone's attention. Her eyebrows were meticulously drawn, her skin thickly powdered, and her cheeks adorned with noticeable blush. Her lips shone gorgeously, and the area around her eyes sparkled with gem-like hues.

Despite the woman's excessive makeup and unconventional style, her captivating brown eyes, high nose bridge, luscious lips, and curvaceous figure emitted a potent charm.

Male patrons in the bar shifted their gazes to the door, momentarily silent. Only when the woman acknowledged a few customers with an aloof nod did the atmosphere spring to life. Some attempted conversation, while others raised their voices at their companions, trying to make an impression on her.

Without lingering, the woman navigated through the crowd and settled on the opposite side of the bar counter.

Unique. If Franca were here, she'd surely strike up a conversation… Lumian felt a twinge of regret for his companion and averted his gaze. He smiled at the bartender and commented,

"That lady seems quite popular."

The bartender wiped away the expression reserved for new adventurers and replied sternly,

"She's my boss."

Boss… Lumian suddenly recalled the bar's name and asked thoughtfully,

"Man-Eating Flower?"

"It's her," the bartender lowered his voice and approached the beautifully made-up woman of indeterminate age. He poured her a glass of some unknown brand of Black Rand.

After the bartender returned, Lumian asked curiously,

"Why does she have the nickname 'Man-Eating Flower?'

“She seems very popular.”

The bartender instinctively turned his head, observing his boss as she focused on her drink and surveyed the patrons nearby. Leaning in, he whispered,

“In Port Pylos, women of her caliber often relish the pursuit and adulation of men but keep them at arm’s length. Our boss, however, is different. If she takes a liking to you, she’ll extend an invitation for a memorable night. Sometimes, we can hear her passion echoing through the halls upstairs…”

The bartender paused, a mix of nostalgia and desire evident on his face.

Pleasure? Lumian subtly frowned and inquired with a smile, “Have you ever been the object of her affections?”

The bartender fell silent.

For a moment, Lumian wondered if the other would smash his head with the cup in hand.

Changing the subject, Lumian asked, “Aren’t there brash men who try to force themselves on your boss?”

The bartender sighed and replied, “Remember the name of our bar.”

Man-Eating Flower… Is that what it means? Lumian grasped the meaning.

The bartender elaborated, “Those who tried to force themselves on our boss ended up badly. Some were severely injured or thrown down the stairs. Others simply vanished.

“Even those who caught her eye would be pale the next day, legs unsteady. They couldn’t walk properly.

“That’s why she’s called ‘Man-Eating Flower.’ She embraces it. Eventually, she named the bar after it.”

This is a departure from the Demonesses of Pleasure’s style… But each demoness has her own unique approach. Franca, a Demoness of Pleasure, stands out from the rest… Lumian’s curiosity sated, he didn’t delve further into the bar owner. Instead, he retrieved an ordinary deck of poker cards from his Traveler’s Bag and asked, “Have you come across anyone using poker cards as a weapon recently?”

According to Anthony Reid’s analysis of Hisoka, a key member of April Fool’s, Hisoka had a strong inclination towards self-expression. After successfully creating the poker card with the ability to change its face, possessing Frost and Cut characteristics, it was clear he wouldn’t limit its use to mere April Fool’s pranks. When engaged in combat or carrying out acts of violence, he wouldn’t hesitate to employ the mystical item to end his target’s life.

This information presented a promising lead for investigation.

Regarding the two pranks orchestrated by Hisoka, they revolved around Matani and were linked to relatively confidential or significant local affairs. Individuals who weren't locals or lacked prolonged residence wouldn't spontaneously choose this area unless they also possessed ample information to support their actions.

Lumian reasonably suspected that Hisoka's original sphere of activity centered on Matani and its neighboring regions.

This rationale prompted his journey to Matani, despite believing that Hisoka had likely heeded Loki's warning and evaded capture, concealing himself.

Understanding Hisoka's past was crucial to deciphering his present and ending his future!

The native bartender scoffed at Lumian's inquiry.

"Do you think I'd have that information?

"Consult the patrol team. Whether they choose to answer is another matter."

Patrol team… Lumian didn't mind and nodded slightly.

Established by Admiral Querarill, the ruler of Matani, the among Beyonders.

In this state, following the withdrawal of most Intis colonial forces, the Church of the Eternal Blazing Sun, the Church of God of Steam and Machinery, and the new Cathedral of the Church of Earth Mother lacked official authority to enforce the law.

While these churches maintained Beyonder teams in their cathedrals across different cities, their jurisdiction was limited to self-defense and safeguarding believers within the cathedral. They couldn't address matters akin to their usual spheres of influence or eliminate potential hidden dangers.

Admiral Querarill entrusted the corresponding authority to the newly formed patrol team.

Some of the patrol team's Beyonders were veterans from Admiral Querarill's army, while others were remnants of the former Balam Empire or former adventurers and bounty hunters.

What a simple name… Lumian pondered for a moment as he glanced at the few wanted posters on the wall.

"Admiral Querarill doesn't want adventurers turning Matani into a hunting paradise? He doesn't want them brawling on the streets under the guise of pursuing targets on wanted posters?"

The bartender shot Lumian a surprised look.

“You’re quite sharp for an adventurer.

“In Matani, the wanted status is earned through crimes committed here. No one cares about your actions elsewhere.”

As expected of one of the adventure paradises… Lumian lifted the kilju and finished it.

Just as he was about to switch to a glass of West Balam-

specific liquor to savor its distinct flavors, he felt a gaze upon him.

It was the owner of the Man-Eating Flower bar, the woman in the black dress with exquisite makeup.

Lumian nodded calmly and shifted his focus back to the bartender.

While this Man-Eating Flower was undoubtedly attractive, she couldn’t match a Demoness in terms of feminine allure. Additionally, Lumian wasn’t fond of heavy makeup.

At that moment, the woman rose from her seat and sauntered over to Lumian. She curled her lips and remarked, “I can sense that you’re like me, a living volcano, but it hasn’t erupted yet. You’re still enduring and waiting in pain.

“Tonight, are you willing to feel my passion?”

Lumian raised his right hand and stroked his face.

You’re taken with me just like that?

Come to think of it, I’ve been a hit with the ladies since my youth. Being a Hunter, I’ve often found myself surrounded by all sorts of beauties… Could this be the subtle influence of the True Men pathway? It doesn’t add up. According to The Adventurer series and recent sea rumors, Mr. Fool’s Oracle, Danitz, is also from the Hunter pathway, yet his romantic endeavors were fruitless, and he doesn’t boast any notable female companions…

Lumian muttered internally and stood up. He offered a smile and inquired, “How should I address you?”

“Bellotia.” The woman’s smile relaxed, making Lumian feel that she might appear even more stunning without her heavy makeup.

Lumian took off his golden straw hat, pressed it to his chest, and bowed slightly.

“Madam Bellotia, I appreciate your invitation, but there’s someone else I hold dear.”

As he spoke, he disregarded Bellotia's slightly stiffened expression and made his way past the Man-Eating Flower, heading for the bar's entrance with composed demeanor.

Bellotia didn't stop him. Like numerous patrons in the bar, she observed as he swung open the sturdy wooden door and stepped out.

As the wooden door thudded shut behind him, Lumian sneered and muttered to himself, I can resist even the charm of a Demoness of Pleasure. Why take the risk with a woman of unknown origins?

Using someone I like as an excuse is already preserving your dignity. If you still seek revenge, I won't hold back…

Having left the bar early, Lumian wandered through the nearby streets, exploring secluded alleys in hopes of stumbling upon incidents or criminals to gather information.

After turning a few corners, he suddenly heard a clanging sound emanating from a dark and deserted alley.

Silently, Lumian approached and delved into the alley. There, he witnessed an intense battle between two men.

One, with evident native characteristics, appeared in his twenties. His face was pallid, and he wielded a sharp but hefty dagger in his right hand. His left palm was slightly open, and a dark shadow hovered in it, creating a chilling atmosphere.

The other, in his early thirties, had ordinary facial features and an expressionless demeanor. Short, black hair framed his face, and his dark-green eyes were encircled by white.

Clad in a plain white shirt and black pants, he wielded longer, sharper weapons resembling scalpels in each hand.

At this moment, the two engaged in a fierce battle, their weapons clashing rapidly, resonating with metallic clangs.

Observing the skirmish, Lumian recognized that these weren't ordinary individuals. They both bore Beyonder characteristics.

Halting his advance, Lumian nonchalantly stood with his hands in his pockets, his right foot propped up against the wall. He unabashedly observed the close-quarters combat between these Beyonders.

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Chapter 636 - 636 Catharsis

636 Catharsis

In just over ten seconds, the two Beyonders locked in combat sensed an observer and instinctively distanced themselves, fixing their gaze on Lumian.

Casually leaning against the alley wall, Lumian chuckled and remarked, “Go on, keep fighting. Don’t mind me.”

With a heavy dagger in hand, the young native, his left palm slightly open, eyed the black-haired, green-eyed, handsome, golden straw hat-donning Lumian with vigilance.

Who is this?

What is he up to?

The short-haired man, armed with two odd-shaped scalpels, was equally vigilant.

He, too, eyed Lumian and the vigilant young native. Suddenly, he crouched, arms hanging loose, and black, sulfurous smoke enveloped him completely.

Lumian’s smile didn’t waver; his right eyebrow arched in mild interest.

Unfazed, the young native extended his slightly open left hand, releasing a shadow that expanded into a distorted “black cloud.”

This “black cloud” merged with the sulfurous smoke, swiftly clearing the alley. The crimson moon once again illuminated the scene.

However, the short-haired man, with dark-green eyes and an emotionless expression, had vanished.

Ran off? The young native was shocked, angry, and vexed.

As he sought clues, he instinctively turned his head to where Lumian had been.

No one stood before the wall.

When did he leave? Why didn’t I sense it at all? the young native, holding the heavy dagger, pondered in bewilderment, uncertain whether to pursue his target.

…

Relying on his spell-like abilities, Bram skillfully escaped the alley, stowing away the two odd-shaped scalpels. He navigated the dark, unlit paths, frequently changing directions in an attempt to lose his imaginary pursuer.

In the process, he pried open a shoemaker's shop on the street, donned a pair of ill-fitting leather shoes, and discreetly handled any signs of his intrusion.

After circling three times, Bram returned to the alley, entering a simple apartment nearby, constructed from black stones and brown wood.

Bram opened his room and entered, closing the wooden door behind him.

He finally breathed a sigh of relief.

Then, he withdrew a transparent glass bottle from the grayish-white cloth bag hanging from his waist. The bottle held a nearly colorless liquid, faintly tinged with red. Suspended within, a blood-colored, well-defined mouth hung open, frozen in intense pain and fear.

As if admiring a masterpiece, Bram stared entranced at the glass bottle in his grasp.

After a moment, he averted his gaze, moved to the side of the room, and opened a cupboard.

Within the cupboard, seven or eight similar glass bottles awaited, each containing a unique lip. The hues varied, some slightly upturned, others in a pouting stance.

Bram positioned his newly acquired spoils in an empty spot, then used sticky blood-colored paint to draw an ominous symbol.

With the task complete, his fingers gently explored different lips through the glass bottles, as if assessing each piece in an art exhibition.

"How twisted."

A mocking sigh suddenly resonated in Bram's ears.

Startled, he whirled around, focusing on the source of the voice. A golden straw hat-donning young man with black hair and green eyes sat in an armchair by the table, the top two buttons of his white shirt now casually undone.

Him?

Bram's pupils dilated as he recognized the man who had witnessed his clash with the Numinous Episcopate member.

The person who had witnessed his battle with the Numinous Episcopate member!

When did he tail me?

How did he pinpoint my location without detection…

Lumian smiled and cordially responded to the other's unspoken queries,

"Hasn't anyone informed you that the preservative in those glass bottles is quite noticeable?

"Moreover, you reek of blood after killing someone."

Bram's heart tightened.

"Are you a Hunter?"

As he spoke, he moved slowly and quietly.

"You seem to know a lot," Lumian replied calmly. "So, why collect those lips, preserve them, and carry them with you? That doesn't sound like the work of a seasoned Serial Killer. I get it. You have the urge and the necessity to gather trophies. Is it for your own satisfaction or part of a ritual? Heh heh, desire can be destructive. Even the most Coldblooded are prone to errors, despite their calculated demeanor, often wagering that they won't be caught if they overlook the details."

Observing the twisted murderer summon black, sulfurous smoke, Lumian deduced that he was a Sequence 7 Serial Killer following the Criminal pathway.

In the Devilology book of the New City of Silver, it was noted that upon reaching Sequence 8 Coldblooded, also known as the Unwinged Angel, individuals underwent inhuman changes, acquiring two or three Devil spell-like abilities, varying from person to person. Some wielded poisonous flames, while others inflicted damaging curses. The creation of black smoke was one such ability.

Combining the target's actions in battle, Lumian concluded he was merely a Sequence 7 Serial Killer.

Bram's brow twitched at Lumian's mockery and sarcasm.

Maintaining his cool, he advanced and murmured, "Did you come here just to converse? What is it you seek from me?"

As soon as he finished speaking, dense black smoke billowed from the Serial Killer, carrying a pungent sulfuric aroma.

Within the shroud of the dark smoke, Bram's eyes deepened as he unleashed another Devil spell.

His body morphed, adopting the color of a chameleon, seamlessly blending with the spreading smoke.

Swift and silent, he approached the door, opened it with precision, and lunged outside.

Bram's vision distorted, and amidst the lingering black smoke, he glimpsed the green-eyed man in the armchair, grinning at him.

Suddenly, he found himself back in the room.

Contrary to his previous orientation, he now faced away from the door.

Bottle of Fiction!

Upon infiltrating the room, Lumian's initial action wasn't a pose but the creation of a Bottle of Fiction, one that prevented Beyonders from exiting!

Unfazed by the sudden wave of disappointment and frustration, Bram darted to the side within the obscurity of the black smoke obscuring his vision. Rolling to the bedside, he retrieved a six-barrel machine gun.

Raising the machine gun, he aimed it at Lumian and unleashed a barrage of bullets.

Amidst the rapid gunfire, Lumian disappeared from the armchair, the furniture torn apart by the storm of metal projectiles.

Gone? As this realization hit Bram, he instinctively glanced upward and witnessed the man in the golden straw hat descending from the ceiling. Surrounding him were numerous crimson, almost white, flaming ravens.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Fire Ravens assailed Bram before Lumian's arrival.

Caught within the encirclement, Bram reluctantly abandoned the six-barrel machine gun. Attempting to evade the impending explosion, he sought refuge under the bed.

However, the crimson, nearly white Fire Ravens dissipated on their own. Lumian landed before him, adorned with a grayish-

white lightning brooch. He smiled and said, "Didn't you just ask me what I wanted? What I want is simple. I haven't vented for too long. I'm in dire need of a humanoid sandbag."

As he finished speaking, Lumian swung his fist at the retreating Bram.

Instinctively, Bram raised his right arm to block.

With a resounding bang, a silver-white bolt of lightning surged from Lumian's fist into Bram's arm, coursing through his entire body.

Bram shuddered. Despite his inhuman transformation, a momentary paralysis gripped him.

Lumian's other fist followed suit, crashing into Bram's side profile.

Bang!

The Serial Killer's head tilted, and a spray of teeth accompanied by blood scattered.

Once more, silver-white lightning enveloped Bram's head.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Lumian unleashed a barrage of punches, turning the encounter into a tempest, making Bram feel like he was caught in a thunderstorm. The electric shocks made any form of retaliation or defense nearly impossible.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Lumian's expression remained icy as he relentlessly struck Bram's face, chest, arms, and head. The Criminal Pathway Beyonder's chest caved, ribs cracked, face swelled, and skull fractured. Charred marks covered his upper body after the brutal assault.

After the relentless beating, Lumian clenched his fists and raised his arm.

He crashed into Bram's left shoulder.

Bang!

Bram's left shoulder crumpled entirely.

Collapsed on the ground, twisted and gasping, Bram's breath weakened.

"That's it? It's fine. I can get my servant to treat you before continuing," Lumian remarked, wearing a devilish smile that Bram recognized all too well.

Without awaiting Bram's fearful response, Lumian removed the Fury of the Sea brooch, stowing it back into his Traveler's Bag. In a gentle tone, he inquired, "Tell me, which family are you from?"

Bram, undergoing the initial stages of dehumanization with a robust physique, realized Lumian had purposely avoided vital points in his attacks, leaving him far from unconsciousness. His mind still functioned, and thoughts raced before settling on Lumian's smile.

After a momentary silence, Bram weakly replied, "I'm a member of the Andariel family."

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Chapter 637 - 637 Unexpected Information

637 Unexpected Information

Andariel, one of the three Devil families… Lumian recognized the last name from Madam Magician and asked with a warm smile, “What brings you to Port Pylos?”

If it weren’t for the lineage running in Devil families for generations, with descendants naturally inclined towards the Criminal pathway, and the other option of the Prisoner pathway seemingly trouble-free, Bram Andariel couldn’t shake the suspicion that the man before him carried the last name Nois or Beria. Why did he exude more of a Devil vibe than Bram himself?

Struggling, he lifted his right hand, wiping his swollen and cracked face, cleaning up the blood and flinging it to the ground.

With the task completed, Bram responded, “Firstly, it’s to gather information about Matani for the family. Secondly, it’s to find an opportunity to act as a Serial Killer. Do you know what acting is?”

He cooperated with Lumian by speaking in Intisian.

Lumian nonchalantly stood before Bram, who was curled up on the ground, and remarked with a smile,

“Your acting is subpar. You don’t seem to be a criminal with a high IQ.

“Why would the Andariel family gather information about Matani?”

Bram had no intention of concealing the truth for the family.

“We’re cooperating with the Rose School of Thought. They want information on this place.”

The Rose School of Thought setting its sights on Matani? That’s right. Matani, seemingly detached from any Northern Continent nation, holds ties to the Feynapotter Kingdom, but their influence is lacking. With Admiral Querarill’s sway, even if the Rose School of Thought and the Andariel family dispatch only a handful of agents, resisting may prove challenging… Lumian perceived the stark contrast between the Southern and Northern Continents.

Whether in Trier, the Feynapotter Kingdom, or the maritime colonies, Lumian encountered criminal acts and mystical disasters driven by the pursuit of strength

and faith. Encroachments on factions or cities were rare, but West Balam presented a different scenario on his first day.

If maritime disorder resulted from chaos, the Southern Continent teemed with factional conflicts, overt or covert, causing widespread chaos.

Lumian, observing Bram's wound clotting, questioned further, "What intel does the Rose School of Thought seek?"

Bram, reflecting, responded, "They want all kinds of information—cathedral locations, military camp details, patrol team compositions, port throughput, daily prices, and the locals' lives."

Are they preparing to rule this place in the future? Lumian inquired, puzzled.

"To whom will you hand over the information you gathered? Where?"

"It will be written and placed in the study of an empty house at 17 Aleg Street. My uncle, Devajo Andariel, will be responsible for retrieving it. We don't usually contact each other, and I don't know where he lives or under what identity," Bram explained in detail. "After becoming a Devil, his special ability is to completely skin humans and perform complicated processes to create Beyonder items with usage or time limitations. No matter who it is, as long as he wears the human skin as clothes, he can transform into the other person and complete the corresponding disguise."

As Bram spoke, he wiped the blood off his body and flung it to the ground, as if obsessed with cleanliness.

This was mentioned in Devilology… Lumian nodded thoughtfully.

He pondered for a moment and asked, "Are there any traces of other Devils in Matani?"

Perhaps Bram and his uncle weren't the only ones sent by the Rose School of Thought to gather information.

Bram shook his head.

"Not recently.

"However, during my investigation, I stumbled upon a string of serial murders around Port Pylos about four years back.

"The victims lay dissected, the scene steeped in blood and marked by the aftermath of a fierce battle. Moreover, the seven casualties were no ordinary individuals; they were Beyonders, ranging from Sequence 7 to Sequence 8."

Listening intently, Lumian felt a surge of intrigue.

As per Franca's explanation, the name "Hisoka" stemmed from a literary work hailing from the original world of transmigrators like themselves. One of the character's defining traits was an insatiable appetite for combat and the thrill of extinguishing formidable adversaries, reveling in the ecstasy and carnage of claiming lives. If the target was sufficiently potent, he'd patiently await their growth, perhaps even offer a nudge.

Hisoka, a key member in April Fool's, adopted this moniker as his code name, driven by an unmistakable urge for self-expression, mirroring this characteristic.

Hisoka is a Beyonder of the Devil pathway. Moreover, his targets are Beyonders while he was at the Serial Killer stage. Unlike other Serial Killers, he doesn't prey on the weak or ordinary people. If he had been a Serial Killer four years ago, he would likely be at least a Sequence 6 by now. There's a strong chance he's a Sequence 5… Yes, he's concealed his identity very effectively. No one in the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society knows his true pathway… Lumian listened attentively to Bram's account without interruption. He eagerly pondered the possibility that Hisoka was a Devil or even a Desire Apostle in his mind.

The curled-up Bram glanced up at him, propping his bloody palm on the ground, and straightening his body slightly.

"This seems like the work of a Serial Killer. Moreover, he's exceedingly confident in his strength and intellect, daring to target Beyonders. However, I noticed some discrepancies."

"What discrepancies?" Lumian concealed his joy behind a gentle smile.

Bram shifted his palm to support himself.

"Serial Killers' victims often exhibit degraded behaviors. For instance, those I've selected typically share a common trait: they enjoy inflicting verbal harm and curses upon others for extended periods. Thus, I'd remove their lips and preserve them. However, the seven slain Beyonders had varying identities, backgrounds, and behaviors, lacking the typical degeneracy."

"Perhaps he's merely a Beyonder with a fascination for serial killing, not necessarily acting out the Devil pathway,"

Lumian mused, masking his interest with a teasing tone. He added playfully, "Were you subjected to constant verbal violence as a child?"

And the Coldblooded and Serial Killer potions amplified corresponding resentments and psychological traumas?

Bram fell silent, his body gradually stretching out, no longer curled up.

Only then did Lumian steer the conversation back to the serial murder case from four years ago.

“Do you have detailed information about the seven Beyonders who were killed?

“Did you identify any suspects during the initial investigation?”

Bram shook his head slowly.

“I only had read the summary provided by the patrol team, not the full investigation files.

“Most of the patrol team members were seasoned Beyonders who had encountered Mutants and Devils before. Their judgment should be reliable.”

Patrol team… Lumian grinned at Bram and remarked, “Is there any other information you deem crucial to share with me? If not, let’s proceed.”

“Yes, of course.” Bram straightened his back abruptly.

In the next moment, he spat out foul words in a language Lumian had never heard before.

Devil Language!

As the Devil words reverberated, the blood, bloodstains, and bloody handprints that Bram had left on the ground were enveloped in a faint light.

A mystical connection seemed to form between them, linking them based on their location, creating sinister symbols and patterns.

In the room’s far cupboard, glass bottles filled with lips and colorless liquid trembled suddenly, as if rocked by an earthquake.

This marked the initiation of a ritual to summon the projection of an Abyssal Devil!

Serial Killers executed serial murders not solely for the thrill but also to appease the Abyssal Devils. Once the killing spree concluded, Serial Killers could proceed to the final step of the ritual, summoning the projection of the corresponding Abyssal Devil. This granted them the assistance needed to fulfill their desires.

Though Bram’s string of murders wasn’t entirely finished and fell short by a few targets, he had met the minimum threshold. It satisfied the basic quantitative requirements, allowing him to expedite the ritual.

Understandably, this shortcut wouldn’t yield the same effectiveness as the standard procedure. Yet, in the face of urgency and danger, Bram paid little heed.

He cooperated willingly, divulging information to divert the enemy’s focus from his subtle actions. For instance, allowing blood to drip onto the ground in a specific pattern and pressing his blood-stained palm in a particular location. These marks replaced conspicuous evil and degenerate symbols with subtler, blood-

stained alternatives.

With the preparations complete, Bram could utilize the Devil Language's "activate" to trigger the ritual, pleasing a high-level Devil and summoning its projection to confront the enemy!

Lumian silently observed Bram Andariel's "handiwork," feeling the room steeped in malevolence and tainted by corruption.

He raised his right hand, snapping his fingers.

Bram, coldly observing him while anticipating the ritual's protection, suddenly heard a rumbling emanate from within his body.

In confusion, he lowered his head and scrutinized his form. Crimson flames erupted from within, inflicting the agony of violent waves tearing through his internal organs, bones, and flesh.

Darkness gripped Bram's consciousness, accompanied by searing pain.

The last sight before losing consciousness: A black-haired young man with green eyes, sporting a golden straw hat, curved his lips, maintaining a warm smile. It was as though he watched a clown diligently tumble into a trap.

Rumble!

The ritual concluded prematurely. An explosion originating from Bram's body tore him into multiple fragments.

Fire Infusion and Delayed Explosion!

As Lumian adorned the Fury of the Sea brooch and ruthlessly assailed Bram, he not only released pent-up emotions but also covertly infused flames into Bram's body, triggering a Delayed Explosion.

This precaution aimed to avert any mishaps.

Moreover, there was no intention of granting forgiveness or negotiating a deal to spare Bram. Thus, there existed no psychological barrier to implanting a controlled time bomb within his body, ready to be activated.

Rumble!

Corpse fragments scattered across the room, some plastering the walls. Yet, this tumultuous event remained contained within the confines of the Bottle of Fiction.

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Chapter 638 Possible Enemy

"My father bore the last name Andariel, cut down by a curse unleashed by a Devil's projection during a ritual gone awry.

"Inheriting his mantle, I became a Beyonder. My mother remains a mystery, perhaps just another name etched into my father's ledger of victims…

Upon the murky surface of a dark mirror, Bram Andariel's blood-drained visage recounted his origins with an impassive mask.

Franca, "invited" by Lumian, faced a full-body mirror, employing her unique magic mirror spirit channeling technique to delve into the Andariel family and the Rose School of Thought.

Regrettably, Bram lingered on the fringes of the secret organization and his Devilish family. His insights were scant. Moreover, to divert Lumian's scrutiny and covertly finalize the ritual preparations, he divulged truths without deceit.

With Spirit Channeling reaching its threshold, Franca posed a final query.

"Who leads the Andariel family now?"

Bram's increasingly translucent and sinister countenance contorted abruptly.

"He—he's dead.

"He became a sacrifice!"

Sacrifice… such theatricality? Before Franca could delve deeper, Bram's figure waned swiftly, dissipating into nothingness.

As the Demoness of Pleasure concluded the ritual, she clicked her tongue and addressed Lumian, "The Andariel family's state is dire. Even the patriarch can be offered as a sacrifice. Are they fully controlled by the Rose School of Thought?"

In light of the temperance faction's alignment with the Church of The Fool within the Rose School of Thought, Franca glossed over distinctions between factions. After all, the Rose School likely teemed with adherents of indulgence.

Lumian responded contemplatively, "The situation in the Abyss isn't quite right either…"

Whether Naboredisley was the pseudonym of Devil Monarch Farbauti or not, the plight of the blood-colored Demon deep within Hanth Island mirrored the Abyss's

troubles to some extent.

With a scoff, Lumian remarked, "We're accustomed to damning others to hell and the Abyss. We believed it to be the worst place. Who knew the Abyss itself could decay? It's falling into its own abyss."

"A hellish jest indeed." Franca glanced at the pristine night sky, less tainted by industrial pollution. The crimson moon of the Southern Continent appeared clearer and brighter.

She steered the conversation back on track.

"If Hisoka truly is from the Devil pathway, his actions make sense.

"The Research Society was lax. Minimal filters or restrictions on its members…"

Franca and Lumian were aware that the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society operated in a way that there were no Devil pathway Beyonders, but nobody knew the truth. Membership didn't entail self-declaration of pathways or proof. Sequences were discerned through interactions at gatherings. Hisoka remained an enigma, his pathways and Sequence elusive even to key April Fool's members.

"Hisoka has always been a loner. He rarely participates in other April Fool's pranks. Is he afraid of being discovered as a Devil?" Lumian contemplated, adding, "He was most inclined to collaborate with Mad Lady, an unabashed lunatic who couldn't care less. She might even relish the prospect of testing if a Devil's blood runs cold…"

I sense a subtle mockery, insinuating my penchant for experimentation… Yet, despite being a Coldblooded, the remnant blood of the Serial Killer Bram retained a hint of warmth. Does Coldblooded mainly denote emotional detachment rather than literal coldness? Or could it be the Southern Continent's summer, heating up the blood of cold-blooded creatures… Franca's musings drifted.

Franca then cautioned Lumian, "If Hisoka is truly a Devil, he'll sense your malice the moment you uncover a key clue. He can decide whether to strike or flee, shifting to another country to hide.

"Dammit! Pursuing a Devil is a real hassle. When we can't beat him, he strikes first. When we can, he's nowhere to be found."

"We could use a Demon Hunter in times like these," Lumian half-jokingly remarked.

From Devilology, Lumian knew that Sequence 4 of the Warrior pathway was the Demon Hunter—an expert in hunting Devils. They were natural adversaries to Devils, Desire Apostles, and even Demons.B1nRealm was the platform where this chapter was initially revealed on N0v3l.B1n.

One of the Demon Hunters' crucial skills was concealing their actions and intentions, making it impossible for targets capable of sensing danger to detect

them!

Franca concurred succinctly, "Now I see why Madam Magician sent you the spirit world's coordinates, instructing you to visit the New City of Silver and find Mr. Sun to eliminate the remaining corruption. It's dominated by the Warrior pathway and boasts many Demon Hunters.

"Though enlisting a Demon Hunter throughout the entire process might strain our resources."

That was a genuine demigod!

While dealing with Hisoka was Lumian's personal grudge, Major Arcana card holders would also take notice, given Hisoka's potential alignment with that Celestial Worthy.

Lumian chuckled.

"No need for a Demon Hunter to intervene directly. I wonder if they can craft charms, potions, or items concealing malice. If so, we can spend a hefty sum through the Tarot Club's connections to acquire them or engage in item exchange."

"Start inquiring soon," Franca advised. "If Hisoka is a Desire Apostle, be cautious. You carry too many random items, and some mystical items have adverse effects on emotions and desires. He could detonate them, injuring you instantly…"

As she spoke, Franca's lips trembled before she sealed them shut.

Lumian nodded solemnly, refraining from boasting about his Ascetic abilities.

Having recently endured an explosion of emotions and desires, he understood it was beyond the endurance of an Ascetic, causing physical damage to the brain.

Franca then said, "The one chasing the Serial Killer was from the Numinous Episcopate, not a regular patrol member. The currents in Matani run deep."

The Numinous Episcopate, a clandestine organization in the Southern Continent, was rumored to trace its origins to the former royal descendants of the Balam Empire and Beyonders unwilling to forsake Death as their faith. Their ultimate aim was to restore Death to His throne, ruling East and West Balam once more.

Lumian strolled to the window, gazing at the street. He grinned and commented,

"This is the chaotic Southern Continent.

"Actually, what piques my interest is why the Rose School of Thought is collecting information about the daily lives of Port Pylos residents. It seems like they want to govern this place.

"That's not their usual style."

Lumian had limited knowledge of the Rose School of Thought's past. All he knew was their recent spree of sacrifices, leaving bloodshed wherever they occupied. Running a city or port for extended periods didn't align with their usual behavior.

"Nothing is certain." Franca's mind was working overtime recently. After a moment's reflection, she added, "Regardless of the Rose School of Thought's motives, considering the sacrifices they've conducted in recent years, they should have gained substantial boons from the Mother Tree of Desire. Now, with Devil family members in the mix, encountering a significant Rose School of Thought member may mean dealing with a dual Bearer of potions and boons. Perhaps a Zombie Recipient, Wraith Tree Spirit, or Sex Addict Apostle? Similar to a Hunter Monk like you."

Franca, always more adept at nicknames and unconventional thoughts than Lumian, playfully referred to Beyonders who were both Zombies and Recipients as Zombie Recipients.

Her primary intention was to caution Lumian that certain Rose School of Thought members might exploit abilities like those of the Sex Addict to provoke his desires. Later, in their Desire Apostle form, they could detonate those desires, providing end-to-end service.

It would be a formidable challenge. In Lumian's condition, facing such Beyonders posed considerable danger.

Lumian chuckled, somewhat self-deprecatingly.

Why do I feel like a powder keg, ready to explode with the slightest touch?

"Nevertheless, I don't intend to meddle in the Rose School of Thought's affairs. I'll write to Madam Magician and report the traces of the Rose School of Thought in Port Pylos. Someone will investigate and handle it. Aren't Mr. Star and Mr. Moon among the Major Arcana card holders overseeing the Rose School of Thought?

"My sole focus is Hisoka. At least, we can be sure that even if he's of the Devil pathway, he likely has no connection to the Andariel family. Otherwise, the Rose School of Thought wouldn't have dispatched Bram and company for reconnaissance. Bram wouldn't have been oblivious if a family member had been active here."

Franca hesitated for a moment before adding, "Hmm, just be careful."

…

Having escorted Franca back to Trier, Lumian stowed away Bram's Serial Killer Beyonder characteristic.

It took the form of a sharp-edged, prismatic ice cube, enveloping faint wisps of thin black gas.

Upon reaching Hotel Orella, Lumian approached the trio of mechanical elevators, pulled the handle, and stood patiently.

With a creak, the double doors opened simultaneously.

Lumian's silhouette, elongated by the crystal chandelier behind him, was mirrored in the mechanical lift.

Beside him stood a slender human shadow.

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Chapter 639 Bribe

Lumian stood before the open mechanical elevator door, casting a glance at the slender shadow beside him. With raised eyebrows, he calmly turned his head, noting the sudden presence diagonally behind him.

The figure appeared as a tall, thin man draped in a complex, layered black robe. His face bore a pale-white complexion, as though untouched by sunlight for an extended period. Atop his black hair sat a fluffy black hat, its edge adorned with a gently swaying white feather.

Lumian retracted his gaze and entered the mechanical elevator. The tall, thin man with dark brown eyes following suit in silence.

Gripping the brass handle within with his right hand, Lumian selected the desired floor, pressing it down to B3, a definitive click echoing in response.

After Lumian selected his intended floor, the lanky man mimicked his action, opting for B18.

As they awaited descent, the distant sound of steam hissing reached their ears. Gears whirred to life, chains tightened, and the luxurious mechanical elevator began its gradual descent.

Throughout the journey, both remained eerily silent, the atmosphere thick with unspoken tension.

Upon arrival at B3, Lumian departed without a backward glance, heading towards Suite 7 with purpose.

As the metal chains continued their retreat behind him, Lumian muttered thoughtfully to himself, Monsieur Iveljsta?

Iveljsta, residing in B18, harbored lifeless servants.

The peculiar appearance of Iveljsta and the condition of his servants led Lumian to suspect his association with a Wraith, a Sequence 5 Wraith of the Prisoner pathway.

The Prisoner pathway, controlled by the Rose School of Thought, held sway over temperance and indulgence factions, both intertwined with the secret organization. It seemed unlikely for a Wraith not to be affiliated with the Rose School of Thought.

Could it be a rare rogue Wraith, or perhaps the vanguard of the Rose School of Thought targeting Port Pylos? Lumian couldn't discount the possibility of a temperance faction member. Yet, in the past few minutes, he discerned no evidence of Iveljsta's protracted indulgence… Lumian resolved to detail his observations in Madam Magician's letter.

Whether something was good or bad would be determined by professionals!

Returning to Suite 7, Lumian noticed Ludwig seated at the dining table, indulging in a feast from a ceramic soup pot with a silver spoon.

Atop the dish, a layer of cheese infused with egg juice charred in spots. Through the substantial hole Ludwig had carved, Lumian glimpsed a medley of pork, beef, fish, shrimp, shells, potatoes, and tomatoes stewed together. The rich aroma of spices mingled with the meats' essence permeated the living and dining rooms, casting a spell that stirred his appetite.

Ludwig continued to eat in silence as Lugano stood up and asked, "Would you like some? This is the local Eseo. Different chefs choose different ingredients, and the taste will vary."

Ludwig, without uttering a word, simply turned his head at Lugano before resuming his meal, quickening his pace.

Taking a seat beside Ludwig, Lumian smiled at the cheese-filled boy and said, "I was going to bring you a better supper, but I thought better of it."

Confused, Lugano inquired, "What supper?"

"You don't want to know," Lumian responded with a Devil-like smile.

The supper he alluded to was Serial Killer Bram's corpse.

Originally intending to bring a few pieces back for Ludwig to sample and discern any "nutrients" and information, Lumian reconsidered, aware of Bram's limited knowledge about the Andariel family's peculiarities. Thus, he abandoned the idea of feeding Ludwig out of prudence.

From Lumian's observations, Ludwig could derive some strength from eating, releasing the seal. However, consuming a Sequence 7 Beyonder corpse might trigger a significant change. Lumian feared his own strength might not suffice to manage potential complications; Ludwig could potentially turn the tables and consume him as a delicacy.

Ludwig's silver spoon paused briefly before he remarked, "If you didn't bring it, why did you mention it?"

Oh, having a little tantrum? Lumian chuckled inwardly and said, "It's to inform you that we've reached an adventurer's paradise, a land of chaos. You'll have ample opportunities for fine dining in the future."

The implication was clear: do well, and I'll remember to reward you with delicacies.

Ludwig, spooning a soft potato stew into his mouth, responded vaguely, "I'm not going to school."

Does this mean that as long as he doesn't go to school, everything else is negotiable? Of course, the prerequisite is that I have to pay with enough delicacies… Satisfied, Lumian rose and made his way to the washroom adjoining the master bedroom, where he washed up.

The brass faucet delivered warm water at a comfortable temperature.

Lumian soaked a towel, relishing the refreshing steam that enveloped his face, invigorating him.

Hotel Orella's utilization of a steam engine to power its mechanical elevators and machinery ensured continuous hot water, a notable feature of its service.

…

The following morning, Lumian, sporting a golden straw hat, appeared on Cania Street beside Port Pylos's Resurrection Square.

Once the ruling center for Intis colonists in Matani, the area bore remnants of its history with road signs and shop names in the Intisian language. Lumian effortlessly traced the path beneath the Intis parasol trees, arriving at a four-story beige house showcasing Intis's opulent architectural style.

Signs adorned in Dutanese, Intisian, Highlander, Loen, and Feysac languages marked the building: "Port Pylos Patrol Team."

Below the sign, five lines had the same meaning: "Only deals with paranormal events."

Fully taking into account the needs of adventurers from different countries to report a case… Lumian playfully remarked as he entered the beige establishment.

Within the hall, devoid of occupants, Lumian found a receptionist casually perusing the day's local tabloid from a lounging position.

The native, in his thirties with dark brown skin and black hair, possessed a slender face and dark brown eyes.

Approaching, Lumian addressed him in Intisian, "I want to report a case."

The native glanced up, rising unsteadily. He opened a partition behind him, uttering a few incomprehensible words in Dutanese.

Lumian could barely understand him speaking in Dutanese.

"Someone who understands Intisian or Highlander…"

This won't do. Since you don't understand foreign languages, don't waste time reading the newspaper. Study diligently… Maintaining a genial smile, he patiently awaited other patrol team members to appear.

Within a mere minute or two, a young man with fluffy brown hair, appearing as if he had fallen asleep without washing his hair the night before, swung open the door from the depths of the hall.

Dressed in a white shirt and an unbuttoned yellow vest, he strolled towards Lumian, one hand casually tucked into his pocket. In fluent Intisian, he inquired, "What case are you filing?"

Lumian assessed the young man, unmistakably hailing from the Northern Continent, cigarette in hand, and brownish-

yellow eyes. With a reserved smile, Lumian responded, "I found a killer."

Amused, the well-defined young man gestured towards the door.

"For killers, go to the police on the opposite street."

Opposite the patrol team stood Port Pylos's police headquarters.

Maintaining his composure, Lumian reiterated, "He's a serial killer."

Serial killer… The young man with the cigarette muttered to himself, a shift in his demeanor indicating a sudden seriousness.

"How do you know?"

"I found many severed lips in his house—human lips," Lumian disclosed with a reserved smile.

"Cut off lips?" The young man, yet to fasten his yellow vest, pressed with urgency, "Where's his home?"

After a brief pause, Lumian replied, "I can't spell the street name, but I can take you to the scene. It's on a street near the Man-Eating Flower bar."

Forcing himself to calm down, the young man took a drag on his cigarette, asking, "What about the killer? Did you see his face?"

"He's dead," Lumian truthfully responded.

Taken aback for a moment, the brown-haired young man queried, "How did he die?"

Lumian's reserved smile transformed into a more open one.

"I killed him."

The young man's expression froze in disbelief.

He scrutinized Lumian for a few seconds before inquiring, "Are you an adventurer here to collect the bounty?"

Bram's serial murders had prompted a local wanted poster issued by Admiral Querarill. However, the poster lacked a corresponding name or appearance, featuring only a case description due to the suspect's unidentified status.

Smiling, Lumian replied, "Sort of, but you can also claim it."

The young man furrowed his brow.

"What do you mean?"

"The bounty can be yours," Lumian stated, making his intention to bribe clear.

The young man cast a glance at Lumian.

"What would you like in exchange?"

"I want the dossier on a serial murder case from four years ago and the relevant items you gathered," Lumian disclosed openly.

There might be something among them that Ludwig could consume.

The young man fell into contemplative silence, assessing the pros and cons.

Eventually, he scratched his brown hair and said, "I can show you the case dossier and related items, but you can't take them away. You can only copy them.

"Also, I need to confirm if it's a Serial Killer at the scene."

"Alright," Lumian agreed, extending his right hand with a smile. "Happy working with you."

The young man shook Lumian's hand.

"Nice working with you. You can call me Camus. What about you?"

Lumian smiled once more.

"Louis Berry."

As Camus entered the door deep in the hall, preparing to gather two teammates, he pondered, Louis Berry… Why does this name sound familiar…

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Chapter 640 Commonality

On the street adorned with the words "Chilicasco" in Dutanese, Lumian led Camus and the rest of the patrol team into the apartment crafted from dark black stones and brown wood.

The moment he swung open the door to Bram's room, a blend of charred scent and the tang of blood wafted through the air.

Corpse fragments lay strewn across the floor, the walls tainted with a mixture of blood and flesh. Handprints, crimson and searing marks adorned every surface.

Camus's eyes widened, as if thrust back into the midst of a serial killing.

Yet, this was a level of devastation beyond even that.

Turning to Lumian, Camus, despite already anticipating the grim answer, habitually inquired, "Where's that person's body?"

Lumian gestured towards the scattered remains and minced meat, responding with a grim smile, "All of these."

Camus fell into a momentary silence before signaling his two stunned teammates to examine the scene.

He had promised to share a portion of the bounty with them, making them witnesses to his "merits."

Camus hadn't ventured alone, wary that this might be a trap set by Louis Berry, an assassination attempt by the Rose School of Thought, or other secret organizations targeting the patrol team.

In the Southern Continent, vigilance was a necessity!

Approaching a cupboard, Camus fixated his gaze on lips soaked in preservatives, the tragic fate of the victims replaying in his mind.

After a moment of silence, Louis Berry spoke calmly, "Bram is a member of the Devil family, Andariel. He was instructed by the Rose School of Thought to gather information in Port Pylos and carry out the serial murders. His uncle, Devajo, was supposed to be his contact, but they never actually met. Instead, he left the information he collected in the study of an empty house at 17 Aleg Street..."

Wh-- Camus and the others were initially startled, then deeply puzzled.

How does Louis Berry possess such detailed knowledge?

Camus couldn't help but glance at the scattered corpse pieces, the blood-soaked walls, the handprints on the ground, and the various charred marks.

Eventually, his gaze settled on Lumian's face.

Lumian responded with a warm smile curling his lips.

Camus and his two companions exchanged glances, refraining from questioning whether Louis Berry obtained the information through spirit channeling, torture, or if he had discerned Bram's motives from the start. Louis's pursuit of the serial murderer wasn't solely due to a criminal act.

"This intel is crucial," Camus nodded, gesturing towards the severely damaged six-barrel machine gun in the room. "We need to secure Bram's weapon."

"No problem," Lumian replied casually.

Being a Pyromaniac, firearms held little appeal for him. Fireballs proved far more potent than the rapid fire of a six-barrel machine gun--just not as swift.

...

Beside Resurrection Square, on Cania Street, on the second floor of the patrol team's four-story building.

Camus placed the dossier and related items on the table in front of Lumian, emphasizing, "You can only read and record. Taking it away or damaging it is not an option."

Lumian nodded subtly, taking one of the envelopes, unwinding the thread a few times, and carefully opening it.

Rather than hastily perusing the contents, he first extracted the dossier, giving it a thorough read.

The dense dossier meticulously outlined the identities, origins, possible pathways, Sequences, locations of death, the scene's conditions, and the varied speculations and investigations conducted by the patrol team.

It was clear the patrol team had been diligent in their investigations, especially when new victims kept emerging. Daily operations varied until the serial murders appeared to cease, leading to a slackening of efforts. They gradually reduced the frequency of case studies and large-scale visit trips. After six months, investigations reached a standstill, concluding the dossier.

In the final report, the vice-captain overseeing the matter concluded: "This is a classic serial murder case committed by the Devil pathway. Though Serial Killers seldom target only seven individuals, as more victims enhance the ritual's efficacy,

this time, all victims are Beyonders, including Mid-Sequence Beyonders. Even with just seven deaths, they are more favored by Devils, pleasing them more than 14 or even 20 ordinary people.

"The main question in this mystic case is that, aside from being Beyonders, there's no common thread among the seven victims. This sets it apart from previous serial murders.

"We hypothesize that the seven victims were active Beyonders in West Balam, likely having committed some form of killing in the past. It can be seen as a manifestation of depravity..."

Lumian read it meticulously, concurring with the theory that seven Beyonders surpassed 14 ordinary individuals in Devil-

pleasing rituals.

This wasn't new information to him. After all, ordinary people were only the third-best sacrifice, while creatures with Beyonder characteristics ranked second.

Similar situations arose in specific "acts," particularly those requiring feedback. It was akin to deciphering an Angel's conspiracy, allowing Lumian to assimilate a potion more effectively than an ordinary person's intrigue.

Having grasped a general understanding of the entire serial murder case, Lumian delved into gathering information about the seven Beyonders. Synthesizing Anthony's psychological profile of Hisoka, Franca's archetype summary and her speculations about the actor, he scoured for potential commonalities.

Among the Beyonders were both men and women, one under Admiral Querarill, while another was a Death believer residing in Port Pylos. Foreign adventurers, an Intis Republic spy stationed in Matani, a peripheral member of the Rose School of Thought, and a local clergyman of the God of Steam and Machinery Church were also among the list.

Judging by their identities and backgrounds, they seemingly had nothing in common.

Yet, for Lumian, who read with subjective conjectures, subtle details held significance.

All seven victims were young, with the oldest in his early thirties, widely praised for combat talent and outstanding intelligence. Lumian mused to himself,

Are the targets Beyonders who are young, filled with potential, and have already reached a certain level of maturity? Even the two who weren't particularly young bore the label of being famous, powerful, with limitless potential… Lumian gained a rough understanding of Hisoka's selection criteria.

If Franca were present, she might have noted that it matched the characteristics of the original archetype.

However, Lumian believed Hisoka would adhere to the archetype when it suited him, not letting it dictate his true motives. Mad Lady's evaluation of Hisoka as not being pure enough further supported Lumian's perspective.

Considering the selection criteria, Lumian thought, Louis Berry fits Hisoka's homicidal fetish. He clicked his tongue and retrieved items related to the case from the official envelopes.

Most were the victim's belongings, but there were also seven thin aluminum foils stained with blackish-brown substances that didn't belong to this group.

Described in the case file, they were wrappings for the local chocolate, left at each crime scene. It was suspected that the murderer would peel off the thin foil after success, indulging in a piece of chocolate before dissecting the corpse.

As the murderer used a gloved hand to extract and consume the chocolate, no corresponding traces were left on the thin foil. Such chocolates were common in Matani, making tracking difficult.

Lumian studied the thin aluminum foil before smiling at Camus, who supervised him.

"Can I take two or three?"

Camus, with his brown hair, furrowed his brow.

"If you want to use divination or other Beyonder methods, you can do it here."

"Just two. It won't hinder your future investigations," Lumian said enticingly. "If you agree to help, I'll give you an additional reward. For example, a very useful summoning incantation for a spirit world creature."

Camus fell silent briefly before agreeing, "Deal."

...

More than fifteen minutes later, Camus, having brought Lumian out to purchase chocolate-like items, observed with a bewildered expression as a rabbit-shaped spirit world creature adeptly copied the dossiers with a fountain pen.

After nearly a minute, Camus shifted his gaze to Lumian, leisurely sitting on the side, peeling off the thin aluminum foil and savoring a piece of dark-brown chocolate. He inquired in a deep voice, "Is this the very useful spirit world creature you mentioned?"

Lumian, chewing on the fragrant chocolate, responded with a smile, "Yes, it's one of the Rabbits of Knowledge. It can help you evade the labor of copying."

What do I need such a copying tool for!? Camus bellowed inwardly, but he restrained himself as he recalled the bounty for the serial murders and the grisly

scene of Bram's demise.

Lumian added with a smile, "When you prefer to keep the origin of your words hidden, summon the Rabbit of Knowledge for assistance.

"Moreover, this is a growth-oriented spirit world creature. It evolves based on the knowledge it receives. Of course, it's ideal if you can secure a contract with the spirit world creature. Otherwise, each summoned Rabbit of Knowledge might differ, making nurturing impossible."

"Growth-oriented…" Camus echoed the term, his expression gradually softening.

…

Back at Hotel Orella, Lumian retrieved the two old aluminum foils from his pocket and handed one to Ludwig.

"Try eating these," he suggested with a smile.

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Chapter 641 Information From Eating

Lugano, who had been observing from the sidelines, was taken aback when Lumian handed the thin aluminum foil to Ludwig and inquired if he wanted to eat it.

Despite Ludwig's previous display of abnormal eating habits, including drinking a tube of human blood in front of Lugano, revealing all the corresponding information, Lugano still harbored reservations about feeding Ludwig just anything, especially something as unconventional as aluminum foil.

After all, Ludwig was still a child!

In the blink of an eye, Lugano witnessed Ludwig silently accepting the old, thin aluminum foil, stuffing it into his mouth, chewing, and swallowing.

"..." Lugano found himself in a daze.

Once Ludwig finished consuming the aluminum foil, he calmly turned to Lumian and inquired, "Which details do you need--information on the cocoa beans used, the precise quantity, additional ingredients, the origin of the aluminum foil ingredients, the production factories, or the individuals most in contact with it?"

Lumian shook his head slowly.

"No need."

This information wouldn't help track down Hisoka. Hisoka had touched the thin aluminum foil while wearing gloves, leaving behind no corresponding personal details. The patrol team had already confirmed that the chocolate packaging was common in Port Pylos, and there was nothing distinctive about the taste.

As Lumian responded, a mix of amusement and surprise washed over him.

He can even extract such information from eating?

As expected of a monster capable of recovering just by eating and gradually breaking free from the seal's constraints!

Ludwig seemed to relish the delicacy. After a few moments, he remarked, "The residual chocolate has a hint of depravity."

Depravity? Could it be that Hisoka had carried it for an extended period, corrupting it? That doesn't make sense. Unless one was a demigod, Beyonder auras couldn't reach such a level. The only possibility was that they were on the

brink of losing control, deep in a state of depravity. However, such a Beyonder's body would undoubtedly display various abnormal details. They wouldn't be able to leave the house; stepping out would lead to discovery and pursuit by law enforcers. Could he rely on the human skin Bram mentioned for disguise? Lumian was initially puzzled, but then he asked with anticipation, "A decadent aura from the Devil pathway?"

Ludwig licked his lips, savoring the taste of the chocolate residue.

"Yes, at least a Demon's."

"Demon's?" Lumian was taken aback and couldn't help but frown.

Having extensively studied Devilology, he knew that Sequence 4 of the Devil pathway was known as Demon, representing a demigod.

If the chocolate slightly tainted with a decadent aura came from a Demon, it clearly didn't belong to Hisoka.

Lumian wasn't arrogantly dismissing Hisoka's potential to have advanced to Sequence 4. Instead, the aluminum foil and chocolate marks represented the state four years ago. Hisoka couldn't have been a Demon back then, unless he had become a Desire Apostle upon transmigration. If that were the case, his targets for the serial murders should have been Sequence 6 or 5 Beyonders.

Although Beyonders at this level were rare in Matani, Devilology didn't specify that serial murders could only occur in one location.

"Are you certain?" Lumian looked at Ludwig for confirmation.

Ludwig replied earnestly, "A Demon's decadent aura has a completely different texture from Low- to Mid-Sequence Devils."

Upon hearing his godson's response, an image suddenly surfaced in Lumian's mind.

Hisoka standing within the wall of spirituality, engaged in a special ritual to establish a connection with a Demon. Throughout this process, a few pieces of chocolate wrapped in thin aluminum foil remained in his pocket. They were slightly tainted by the decadent aura permeating the altar, subtly and silently transforming...

Yes, when I perform a ritual, I don't remove all my belongings in advance and leave them outside the altar unless there's a specific mention in the ritual requirements that I should avoid... As a Conspirer, Lumian quickly made a guess and asked Ludwig, "Can you tell which Demon's decadent aura it belongs to?"

Lumian's current idea was that if Hisoka couldn't be found in the future, he would exhaust his resources and seek the help of the New City of Silver's Demon-Hunter experts. He would set up a ritual and summon the Demon who had established a connection with Hisoka. He would have it beaten up before interrogating it for

information about Hisoka.

Ludwig shook his head.

"I can't absorb such subtle information yet. All I know is that the decadent aura belongs to a family called Nois."

Nois, one of the three Devil families... The Demon responding to Hisoka's special ritual is from the Nois family? That's peculiar. How can a Demon respond to a ritual remotely? It has to be at Sequence 3, or even at the Angel level... According to Devilology, Serial Killers can summon projections of Abyss Demons because those Devils can use the special properties of the Abyss to respond, not because they have reached the corresponding level. However, the Nois family is a Devil family active in the real world and hasn't entered the Abyss... Lumian made many connections from the Nois last name.

He concluded by listing three possibilities:

Firstly, the Demon responding to the Hisoka ritual was none other than the Nois family's Angel.

Secondly, it had reached Sequence 3 and was located in Port Pylos, near Hisoka.

Thirdly, the Nois family had a close connection to the Abyss. They could borrow the Abyss's properties to some extent. Even a Demon could respond to prayers from afar.

Lumian pondered for a moment and asked Ludwig, "Any other information?"

"No," Ludwig replied, disappointing Lumian.

Lumian handed over the remaining piece of aluminum foil.

"Try this one too."

Ludwig didn't hesitate. Like many children drawn to the sweetness lingering on wrappers, he popped the thin foil stained with chocolate into his mouth and chewed.

After a moment, while Lugano snapped back to reality, Ludwig looked at Lumian and remarked, "There's more to this one."

"What kind of information?" Lumian knew that Ludwig's special mention had to be of some value.

Ludwig responded with the air of a connoisseur, "This thin aluminum foil rested on a table marked by old blood and a splash of coffee. The blood belonged to a deceased male. The spirituality was initially potent, and the coffee was Fermo blend, unsweetened, distinctly bitter yet fragrant."

Upon hearing Ludwig's account, Lumian's mind painted another vivid scene.

A few pieces of chocolate wrapped in thin aluminum foil lay nonchalantly on a table, soaked in old blood and spilled coffee. They seemed to share an intimate connection for an extended period. Then, a hand reached out, snatched them up, and swiftly pocketed them before making a hasty exit.

Connecting the dots, Lumian strongly suspected that the table had served Hisoka in a dwelling he once occupied.

"Do you have detailed information on the male deceased?" Lumian probed Ludwig for more insights.

Ludwig shook his head once more.

"No, unless I consume the blood directly."

14:53

The bloodstains likely belonged to one of the victims, Lumian Directly support the authors on WebNovel!

surmised. He pondered whether this information was documented in the case file or elsewhere. Was Hisoka using "No, unless I consume the blood directly."

The bloodstains likely belonged to one of the victims, Lumian the table as an autopsy platform or perhaps an altar? Lumian mused inwardly, a tinge of disappointment clouding his thoughts. Nevertheless, he refocused his attention on the Fermo coffee.

He mumbled to himself, Does this mean that Hisoka has a penchant for coffee, specifically the Fermo blend from the Paz Valley…

The Paz Valley, nestled in the Southern Continent, boasted the renowned Fermo coffee, comparable to Feynapotter's highlander coffee and the Southern Continent's own version. It was a luxury enjoyed mainly by the middle class for extended periods.

In Matani, where both East and West Balam produced high-

quality coffee beans, such occurrences were rare. The locals had access to a plethora of excellent coffee beans. Those unfit for export were sold at affordable prices, favored by both colonists and natives.

Lugano, now fully attentive, cautiously added, "I've heard that those who frequent Fermo coffee appreciate its bitterness and fragrance. However, those who prefer it without sugar are a rare breed."

In essence, Hisoka's unique taste in coffee is uncommon here… Lumian smiled at Ludwig and remarked, "Well done. If I apprehend the target in the future, I'll give him to you."

When the time came, Lumian would likely be a Sequence 5. Moreover, he wouldn't give Ludwig the Beyonder characteristic. Lumian could ease his grip on the boy.

Give… The notion sent a chill down Lugano's spine, a hint that his imagination might have run too wild.

To others, gifting a Beyonder of the Devil's Pathway might relegate the recipient to a life of servitude or worse, becoming an ingredient. However, with Ludwig…

Lugano involuntarily shuddered.

He didn't dare to think about it!

Ludwig nodded, his eyes gleaming with anticipation.

Lumian turned to Lugano and said, "Don't you have a good grasp of Dutanese? Check Port Pylos this afternoon and find out which shops sell Fermo coffee. It's preferable if it's one that has been operating for four to five years or longer."

"Alright." Lugano suddenly felt a surge of usefulness.

In the evening, he returned to Suite 7 at B3 and reported to Lumian, "There are only three shops selling Fermo coffee. One is on Cania Street in Resurrection Square…"

"You mentioned Cania Street in Resurrection Square?" Lumian interjected.

"Yes, Unit 21 on that street. It's called Matani Import and Export Shop," Lugano confirmed.

Lumian fell silent.

Isn't it close to Port Pylos's patrol team?

...…

In Port Pylos, on the third floor of the building housing the patrol team.

Camus received the bounty and gave a fifth to his two companions.

He then entered the telegraph room and inquired of the telegrapher, "Do you have a telegram for me?"

He had previously sent a telegram to inquire with certain friends if they had any information on Louis Berry, the adventurer.

Since they were in collaboration, he needed to ascertain the other party's situation first!

The female telegrapher, wearing a sweet smile, straightened up and responded, "Yes! From Farim."

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Chapter 642 Visit

Camus extended his thanks to the telegrapher, retrieved his telegram, and swiftly scanned its contents.

"Louis Berry, Intisian, hailed as the most renowned adventurer in the Fog Sea over the past six months. Sporting a distinctive golden straw hat, he successfully hunted down the Demon Warlock Burman, earning a hefty bounty of 600,000 verl d'or. Furthermore, he collaborated with the Earth Mother Church in Port Santa to address the crisis surrounding the Sea Prayer Ritual. However, the precise details remain elusive…"

Upon perusing the telegram, Camus released a silent sigh and remarked to himself, He's truly a great adventurer. It's no surprise he managed to handle that Serial Killer…

Camus couldn't gauge the Demon Warlock's true strength, but the substantial bounty spoke volumes. The sum of 600,000 verl d'or was a testament to the Demon Warlock's threat level. Even if Louis Berry's fame stemmed solely from his encounter with such a formidable adversary, he undeniably stood among the great adventurers.

It wasn't lost on Camus that Bram, the perpetrator of numerous murders that had kept the patrol team occupied for nearly two weeks, only carried a bounty of 50,000 verl d'or. Such figures tempted Camus to consider collaboration with Louis Berry.

Reflecting on the substantial 600,000 bounty and comprehending Louis Berry's generosity, Camus tucked away the telegram and graciously commended the female telegrapher with an exaggerated flying kiss.

Running his fingers through his tousled brown hair, Camus descended to the hall below.

The evening had descended, and it wasn't his night for duty. He could head home and take a break.

Out of the blue, Camus's gaze focused as he spotted the handsome Louis Berry, sporting black hair, green eyes, and a laid-back demeanor, seated on the sofa, casually playing with a golden straw hat.

Approaching cautiously, Camus inquired, "Is there anything else?"

Lumian ceased twirling the straw hat, sat up straight, and grinned.

"I've got something else to talk to you about."

Realizing that one of the three shops that could buy Fermo coffee was on Cania Street, not far from the patrol team, Lumian's immediate thought was:

Could Hisoka be hiding within the patrol team, perhaps as one of its members?

Is the most dangerous place the safest?

After careful consideration, Lumian considered it a possibility, though not particularly likely.

On the one hand, among the seven Beyonders who were killed, including the Death believer in Port Pylos, the Rose School of Thought's peripheral member, and the spy left behind in Matani by the Intis Republic, were secretive individuals, blending in with ordinary people. Without substantial information sources, it would be challenging for Hisoka to identify them as Beyonders and target them.

This suggested that either Hisoka had a unique ability to discern Beyonders from ordinary people or possessed a mystical item granting him such insight, or he had control over an extensive information network. The patrol team, being intimately familiar with Matani and Port Pylos, might have already detected something amiss with the Death believer, the Rose School of Thought's member, and the Intis spy and been conducting surveillance.

Hisoka's membership in the patrol team would explain his ability to uncover a Beyonder's hidden identity and carry out the murders.

On the other hand, if Hisoka, a Devil pathway Beyonder, had joined the patrol team, suspicions would undoubtedly arise once the serial murders occurred—unless he concealed his true pathway from the start. However, the patrol team differed from the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society. Hisoka would need to use his abilities frequently during daily missions, making it difficult to conceal them for months or years.

There was no room for mishaps. It wasn't feasible for him to meticulously prepare before each mission, adorning the corresponding mystical item solely to reveal his abilities in that specific situation, right?

Even as a Devil, he couldn't pull it off!

Given that many missions had no specific target, Devils couldn't foresee imminent danger.

Driven by suspicion and uncertainty, Lumian took a special trip to the patrol team, visiting Camus to unearth new clues or gain inspiration to either confirm or eliminate the corresponding possibilities.

"What do you want to discuss?" Camus furrowed his brow.

Is this guy scheming to use the morning's bribe as leverage to threaten me?

The dossier isn't particularly important. Even if I lose it, it's just a minor punishment!

Wearing his golden straw hat, Lumian rose with a smile. Pointing at the door, he suggested, "How about a cup of coffee?"

After a brief contemplation, Camus responded in a deep voice, "Fine."

Exiting the patrol team's entrance, Lumian made his way toward the Matani Import and Export Shop.

In the fading dusk, he immediately spotted Port Pylos's police headquarters diagonally opposite the patrol team.

Numerous individuals clad in dark-blue police uniforms moved in and out, some holding cups of coffee.

Wh— Lumian's heart stirred.

Could Hisoka not be a member of the patrol team but a high-ranking police officer at the police headquarters?

At a certain rank, the police collaborated with official Beyonders to access a wealth of information. Many official Beyonders' investigations were conducted through the police due to limited manpower.

If Hisoka held a significant position at Port Pylos's police headquarters, it was plausible for him to identify the three concealed Beyonders. Additionally, there would be no risk of exposing his pathway during routine missions, and acquiring his favored Fermo coffee beans would be a breeze.

On the other hand, it was precisely because the Matani Import and Export Shop offered a variety of coffee beans that Hisoka fell in love with the pure, bitter, and fragrant Fermo coffee without sugar.

However, this was just one possibility among Lumian's speculations. For instance, Hisoka, being a bold and self- assured individual, might have visited Cania Street specifically to buy Fermo coffee, relishing the incompetence and frustration of the patrol team. Alternatively, Hisoka might not be a Beyonder of the Devil pathway but simply possessed the corresponding Sealed Artifact and had mastered a unique ritual to appease Devils. There was also the chance that Lumian was mistaken— Hisoka might not be linked to the serial murders four years ago.

With these thoughts in mind, Lumian contained his excitement and entered the Matani Import and Export Shop alongside Camus. They reached the section where various coffee beans were on display and secured a seat in the attached coffee shop.

"Highlander coffee with milk and two cubes of sugar," Camus ordered from the waiter with a sense of familiarity.

Lumian, on the other hand, opted for a cup of fragrant Intis coffee.

While waiting, Lumian casually observed the coffee choices of other customers. Turning to Camus, he inquired, "Judging by the name, are you a Feynapotterian?"

Camus hesitated briefly before truthfully responding, "My full name is Don Givré Camus Castiya."

He was willing to share his full name as the telegram mentioned Louis Berry having a good working relationship with the Church of Earth Mother.

Lumian chuckled.

"So, you're a noble lord."

The name Castiya belonged to the royal family of the Feynapotter Kingdom, and "Don" at the beginning of Camus's name signified "Honorable," representing his noble status.

Camus smiled wryly and remarked, "If I were truly a nobleman, why would I join a local patrol team in the Southern Continent?

"Our branch has long dwindled, but I can't deny that this last name and the Don prefix have provided me with advantages beyond those of ordinary people. I received a potion upon reaching adulthood, achieving Sequence 9 Beyonder status. However, my subsequent advancements were the result of my own efforts."

Accepting my 50,000 verl d'or bribe is part of your efforts? Lumian teased inwardly. He glanced at the two cups of coffee brought by the waiter, feigning casualness as he asked, "Don't you want to try some other coffees? Is highlander coffee your only choice?"

Camus raised his cup and took a sip. "I'm accustomed to its taste."

Lumian removed his golden straw hat and took a sip, smiling as he replied, "Fair enough. Just like how I can never acclimate to Fermo coffee. It's too bitter with regular sugar, and too cloying with too much. Some people appreciate the bitterness and fragrance of Fermo coffee, opting for just a hint of sugar."

Lumian anticipated Camus to respond with, "Yes, some even drink Fermo coffee without sugar." However, Camus's reply didn't align with his expectations.

"That's how it goes. What's on your mind?"

Internally exhaling, Lumian spoke openly, "As you can tell, I'm deeply intrigued by the serial murder case from four years ago. It's my sole purpose in Port Pylos—a highly valuable assignment."

"Highly valuable? It's just a Serial Killer." Camus let out a sigh of relief upon realizing Louis Berry was interested in discussing this matter.

Even if he were blind, he could tell Louis Berry's genuine concern about the serial murders four years prior.

Lumian vaguely explained with a smile, "This case holds secrets beyond your wildest imagination."

For example, transmigrators, or that Celestial Worthy…

Camus took another sip of his highlander coffee and reflected.

"I arrived in Matani over five years ago. At that time, the Intisians had just departed, and the kingdom and the Church's forces had completed their initial infiltration. I sensed numerous opportunities, thinking I could leverage my last name to secure a prominent position. Hence, I took a ship across the Fog Sea. The outcome differed from my expectations, but it was still acceptable."

Camus, in his mid-twenties, sighed as he recounted the past.

He continued, "When the case unfolded, I was merely a Sequence 8. Alongside a few teammates, I followed Vice-

Captain Reaza to investigate."

He paused, offering Lumian a smile that seemed to convey, "If you want more information, show more sincerity."

In that moment, Lumian was contemplating another question.

If Hisoka truly belongs to the Devil pathway and has joined the patrol team, is there a way for him to conceal his identity?

Putting himself in those shoes, Lumian realized that concealing the abilities of the Hunter pathway wouldn't pose a problem.

Most situations could be handled with the Ascetic pathway's abilities and a couple of items.

Of course, the usage of an Ascetic's abilities was suspicious.

Could it be that Hisoka is indeed a bestowed individual who typically exhibits powers from the boon pathway? Lumian raised his cup and took a sip of coffee, avoiding delving into the details of the serial murders. He gazed at Camus thoughtfully and inquired, "Do you have members in the patrol team skilled in divination or decryption?"

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Chapter 643 Target Suspect

Chapter??643 Target Suspect

643 Target Suspect

Camus couldn't comprehend why Louis Berry had abruptly changed the topic and neglected to charge for the pertinent information. Recollecting, he mentioned, "Yes, there's a Magician. He was initially an officer of the Admiral Guard but later got transferred to the patrol team."

Later… Lumian frowned slightly.

"When did he transfer to the patrol team?"

"Why do you ask? Last year," replied Camus. He had no clue about Louis Berry's inquiry, making it unclear what information was vital.

Last year… It doesn't seem to be Hisoka, judging by appearances… Although possibilities can't be completely ruled out. Serving as an officer in Admiral Querarill's guard provides opportunities for gathering intel. Perhaps he didn't purchase Fermo coffee from this Import Export Shop. It could be one of the other two cafes… Even so, there's a logical reason for buying it here. Yes, to relish watching the incompetence and frustration of the patrol team… Lumian temporarily placed the Magician on his suspect list.

He didn't dismiss the possibility that the other party was Hisoka just because they were a Sequence 7. This was because the level of a boon might not be the same as the level brought about by potions.

Furthermore, Lumian had vaguely perceived changes beneath Matani's surface from the Magician's departure from Admiral Querarill's guard to joining the patrol team.

Beyonders of the Seer pathway either originated from the Church of The Fool or were associated with Intis's Bureau 8 or secret organizations supporting Bureau 8, like the Secret Order. While there were wild Beyonders, very few evolved into Magicians. Coupled with Matani's history as an Intis colony, Lumian reasonably deduced that the Magician had close ties to the Intis Republic, a fact well-known to Admiral Querarill.

He retained the Magician in the guards to maintain a specific connection with Intis and handle the new Feynapotter Kingdom. By achieving a balance of power, he

could better sustain his rule.

The Magician's departure from the Admiral Guard last year might indicate that Admiral Querarill had truly gauged the Feynapotter Kingdom's stance after years of collaboration and had sided with them.

Lumian's speculation didn't eliminate the suspicion that the Magician might be Hisoka. Loki, from Intis and a Secret Order member, held a mid-management position in Bureau 8. It was entirely possible for him to use the proper channels to involve Hisoka in Bureau 8's overseas section and recruit him into the Secret Order.

After contemplating for a moment, Lumian inquired, "Does that Magician have a fondness for Fermo coffee?"

He didn't directly ask about the other party's name and characteristics.

Camus shook his head.

"He doesn't appreciate coffee. His preference leans towards sweet drinks like Gwadar."

Gwadar, a well-loved local beverage in West Balam, was crafted from locally grown berries and contained a certain amount of caffeine. It had the same impact as coffee in enhancing mental strength and combating fatigue. However, its hue was orange-yellow, with a hint of sweetness amidst the sourness. It served both to alleviate the sweltering heat and quench thirst.

Prefers sweetness… Lumian felt a sense of disappointment.

Four years ago, Hisoka had no inkling that he would confront a monster like Ludwig in the future. It was unlikely for him to deliberately splash some unsweetened Fermo coffee on the table with the chocolate. Lumian cautiously believed now that Hisoka truly enjoyed bitter coffee.

In that case, the Magician, with a sweet tooth, probably wasn't Hisoka. Unless Hisoka meticulously maintained the traits of each identity, consistently playing the role of a Magician who relished drinking Gwadar on a daily basis.

He wasn't an Actor who needed to meticulously perform every aspect of his daily life!

Moreover, he had no reason to digest Faceless!

As he contemplated, Lumian's heart skipped a beat.

Actor…

If Hisoka is genuinely a Beyonder of the Devil pathway, apart from his belief in the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings due to transmigration, he might also be influenced by the Mother Tree of Desire in his daily life.

Could it be that the boon of the Hisoka pathway doesn't come from one of the Celestial Worthy's Seer, Apprentice, or Marauder, but rather from the Mother Tree of Desire?

The current Celestial Worthy desires the invasion of evil gods into the world within the barrier. It's not implausible for Him to collaborate with the Mother Tree of Desire and tacitly permit Hisoka to exploit the Mother Tree of Desire…

With a fresh train of thought, Lumian observed the now-silent Camus and took a sip of Intis coffee, offering a smile as he changed the subject.

"Any Beyonders from the Prisoner pathway in the patrol team?"

He had long suspected that the Mother Tree of Desire was an evil deity at the pinnacle of the Criminal, Prisoner, and Scrooge pathways. The corresponding boons likely originated from one of them or were intertwined.

Lumian refrained from asking about the existence of the Scrooge pathway because it was even more suspicious than the Criminal pathway, also known as the Devil pathway. It didn't belong to the twenty-two paths of the divine.

It was akin to a thief being apprehended by the police and asking in confusion, "I clearly disguised myself and left no traces. How did you quickly lock onto me," only to receive the answer, "This isn't Trier. No ordinary person would disguise themselves as a turkey and hide in a secluded alley."

"Do you think there's a spy from the Rose School of Thought in the patrol team?" Camus believed Louis Berry was casually raising the issue of the Rose School of Thought's interest in Port Pylos. "No, definitely not. He adheres to temperance and doesn't indulge at all."

Lumian smiled.

"In other words, there really is a Beyonder from the Prisoner pathway?"

"Yes, a Sequence 6 Zombie…" Camus confirmed.

Lumian interjected suddenly, "Don't disclose who he is, what he looks like, or his characteristics. Answer a few questions first."

"What questions?" Camus, feeling a bit disoriented from the rapidly changing topics, planned to decide when to ask for benefits later.

Lumian held a porcelain cup filled with Intis coffee and casually said, "When did he join the patrol team?"

"Half a year after me," Camus recalled.

You arrived in Matani over five years ago and joined the patrol team shortly after. Half a year later means that the Prisoner was already on the patrol team when the

serial murder case occurred four years ago… Lumian's spirits lifted as he pondered for a moment.

"Did he face a catastrophe in the past and nearly died?"

"No." Camus shook his head. "At least, I don't know."

Lumian maintained his smile, showing no signs of disappointment, and said, "Does he have a liking for Fermo coffee?"

"Yes, he adores Fermo coffee and is the type who doesn't add sugar," replied Camus without much thought. Then, he remembered Louis Berry's inquiry about the Magician's preference for Fermo coffee in the patrol team.

He quickly formed a guess.

"Is there an issue with the ones enjoying Fermo coffee? Does the culprit of the serial murders four years ago have a taste for Fermo coffee? There are very few places in Port Pylos where you can get Fermo coffee. This is one of them. Even cafes selling Fermo coffee procure the beans from here… Are you suspecting that the murderer from four years ago is part of the patrol team?"

Impressive. You reacted swiftly and identified the core issue… Lumian inwardly praised Camus.

Simultaneously, a surge of joy filled his heart.

In Matani, Fermo coffee was a rare commodity, and those who preferred it without sugar were even rarer. Moreover, this individual was on the patrol team and seemingly from the Prisoner pathway!

With so many conditions aligning, Lumian felt like he had caught Hisoka by the tail!

To avoid triggering any sense of malice and danger, Lumian refrained from asking about the patrol team member's name, appearance, identity, or characteristics.

Feigning ignorance about the enemy, Lumian casually asked, "Is he from around here?"

Observing Camus's silence, Lumian added with a smile, "I won't claim the official bounty."

Camus's expression eased.

"He's a local of Port Pylos, born in Tizamo Town, which is part of Port Pylos."

Though the patrol team wasn't as stringent in member recruitment as the various Churches and governments, they still gathered basic information and conducted verifications. Otherwise, Admiral Querarill might have to worry about being assassinated by a patrol team member investigating a Beyonder case one day.

Tizamo Town… the location of one of Hisoka's pranks… It fits! Lumian controlled his excitement, preventing the corners of his mouth from curling up. Regrettably, he told Camus,

"Unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the target."

This was to prevent Camus from investigating the target.

This could potentially alert the other party to the corresponding malice!

"Alright." Camus shrugged.

Curious, he inquired, "How did you find out that the murderer from the serial killings four years ago liked Fermo coffee?"

"I was already aware of such a person before starting the investigation," Lumian replied with a meaningful tone.

He chose not to disclose that the information came from the thin aluminum foil wrapping of the chocolate. Revealing this might prompt Camus to believe he could uncover more clues and reignite the investigation, potentially drawing Hisoka's attention.

With this realization, Lumian understood something.

I should now be a target for Hisoka, but fishing has its benefits…

Louis Berry, adorned with a golden straw hat, had bribed members of the patrol team to examine the files of the serial murder case from four years ago. Other team members paid little attention, but if the Prisoner was indeed Hisoka, he would have detected Lumian—his adversary's investigation into the four-year-old serial murder case.

Hisoka refrained from taking action likely because Lumian openly presented himself as Louis Berry, making no effort to hide his identity. This led to the suspicion that Lumian was fishing, making Hisoka cautious of stepping into a potential trap. There was no sense of malice or danger perceived, as Lumian didn't possess details about the suspect's identity. Lumian was merely preparing for a potential surprise attack from a Devil or Desire Apostle.

Before, I fished to catch fish, but now my fishing is a bluff… Lumian's thoughts clarified as he looked at Camus and said,

"Keep an eye out for anyone at the police headquarters who enjoys Fermo coffee."

"Alright," Camus agreed, thinking that Louis Berry had identified the suspect as a member of the patrol team and the police through details he wasn't aware of. For now, the possibility of the patrol team members was tentatively ruled out.

After finishing the remaining Intis coffee and settling the bill with the corresponding verl d'or, Lumian donned the golden straw hat and maintained his smile. He left the Matani Import and Export Shop and Cania Street, step by step.

Passing by Port Pylos's police headquarters, he deliberately cast a few glances.

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Chapter 644 Patrol Team

Camus stood at the entrance of the Matani Import and Export Shop, casually smoking a cigarette as he observed the passing customers. Despite his watchful eyes, he didn't spot anyone purchasing Fermo coffee.

As the gas street lamps gradually illuminated the surroundings, casting a dark blue hue across the sky, Camus extinguished his cigarette and tossed it into a nearby trash can. He then made his way back to the beige four-story building that housed the patrol team.

Originally planning to indulge in an Intis feast in a neighborhood frequented by foreigners to celebrate his unexpected windfall of 40,000 verl d'or, his plans were disrupted by Louis Berry. By the time he returned, it was already late, and he couldn't be bothered to wait for a top chef to prepare something special. Instead, he decided to return to the patrol team, pool money with his close teammates, and order takeout from a nearby restaurant. After satisfying his hunger, he intended to relax at a bar or dance hall.

While crossing the hall, Camus spotted a teammate with dark brown skin, thick lips, and a height exceeding 1.8 meters. Curious, he inquired, "Why did the guy in the straw hat come looking for you again?

"Heh, I heard you and the others caught a Serial Killer and got a bounty of 50,000 verl d'or?"

In Matani, the currency was commonly denoted in verl d'or and Delexi copper coins, a system ingrained during Intis colonization. Despite Admiral Querarill's control, there were no significant changes in this aspect. The only difference was a partnership with the Feynapotter Kingdom's bank that facilitated the free exchange of verl d'or and gold risot.

If he were one of the two teammates--either the Magician or the Zombie--whom Louis Berry had asked about, Camus would undoubtedly be on high alert. However, the person standing in front of him was Sow, a Sequence 8 Pugilist of the Warrior pathway. Sow had joined the patrol team as an adventurer just last year and was known for having a pleasant personality. Besides a bit of laziness and a love for enjoyment, there were no significant issues.

Camus laughed and said, "That's my informant. Without him, I wouldn't have received that much bounty."

Sow, with his single eyelids, had a realization.

"Did he come to you just now to get his share?"

Camus thought for a moment and replied, "That's one reason. The other reason is that he's still investigating the serial murders from four years ago and wanted to ask me for some details."

He had kept the case dossier hidden from the captain and vice-captains of the patrol team, but he couldn't keep it from his teammates. Therefore, he had no intention of concealing Louis Berry's investigation into the serial murders from four years ago. Moreover, he planned to monitor the police headquarters to identify anyone who enjoyed Fermo coffee and seemed suspicious. He would need his teammates' assistance to some extent.

"Any progress? Any chance of claiming the bounty?" Sow, dressed in a pleated shirt and carrying a broadsword, displayed visible interest.

Camus wasn't ready to provide detailed information at the moment. He vaguely responded, "He suspects that the murderer might be hiding at the police headquarters from four years ago. I plan to investigate discreetly."

"Why do you think the murderer is a police officer?" Sow looked puzzled.

Camus hadn't discussed this with Lumian earlier, so he pondered for a moment and explained, "Consider this. In the case four years ago, only Beyonders were targeted. Several of them usually concealed their identities. How could the murderer accurately locate them and know that they were Beyonders?

"Only us or those from the police headquarters at a certain rank can access that kind of information. It's easier to verify if there are Beyonders of the Devil pathway on the patrol team."

Four years ago, during their investigation, Vice-Captain Reaza had proposed this idea. However, he only suspected that the Serial Killer was hiding within the patrol team and hadn't considered the police headquarters or the Admiral Guard. Subsequently, the patrol team conducted an investigation and found no suspicious individuals, leading them to shift their focus.

"I see a glimmer of hope and smell the fragrance of verl d'or," Sow said with anticipation. "If you need help, feel free to look for me. I heard that Kolobo and the others just followed you to the scene and each got 5,000 verl d'or!"

"No problem," Camus readily agreed.

Then, he walked past Sow and along the corridor toward his office.

At the door of his office, Kolobo poked his head out, observing the conversation between Camus and Sow.

Kolobo, about the same age as Camus, in his mid-twenties, had dark hair, azure eyes, and a slender figure. He held a pair of black sunglasses in his hand.

He lowered his voice and said to Camus, "Stay away from Sow for the time being."

"Why?" Camus asked, surprised.

Observing Sow vanish through the door leading to the hall, Kolobo averted his gaze and explained,

"I have a feeling that something bad will happen if one interacts with him during this period."

"Then why didn't you warn him?" Camus frowned in confusion.

As a Sequence 8 Robot of the Monster pathway, Kolobo possessed formidable spiritual perception and could vaguely sense certain things.

"I warned him. He thinks everything's fine. I even reported it to the Captain." Kolobo shrugged.

As he spoke, the thin Beyonder recalled something.

"That adventurer, Louis Berry, is also dangerous. When I arrived at the scene this morning, I didn't dare to look directly at him. Occasionally, I would glance at him and see large amounts of blood, flames, and death.

"I didn't want to tell you at first. I felt that if I said it, fate would suffocate me. Phew, it actually seems okay to say it now. It seems I'm too sensitive."

That dangerous? As expected of a great adventurer who received a bounty of 600,000 verl d'or at once... While Camus, who knew about Louis Berry's deeds, wasn't overly shocked, this was the first time he had heard a Monster like Kolobo describe someone in such a way.

Camus patted Kolobo's shoulder.

"Thank you. I'll be careful."

With that settled, he asked curiously, "Was Louis Berry the first person to give you such a feeling?"

"No, there's another one." Kolobo shook his head.

"Who is it?" Camus was surprised.

Kolobo's expression suddenly turned serious.

"I can't say. I'll die if I say it. I'll die!"

With that, the thin Beyonder swiftly left Camus's office.

…

Upon returning to Hotel Orella, Lumian headed straight for the master bedroom.

In the subterranean suite, even during the scorching season, a refreshing coolness lingered in the air.

On the desk in the master bedroom, a neatly folded letter awaited Lumian.

Madam Magician's response… Lumian picked up the letter and began reading.

"Excellent. You have a good understanding of yourself.

"The Rose School of Thought and the Numinous Episcopate will be managed by dedicated personnel. No need for you to take unnecessary risks. Concentrate on dealing with Hisoka. If they request your help, you may cooperate.

"The Beyonder characteristics left behind by members of the Rose School of Thought, especially those of the Devil and Prisoner pathways, come with a certain level of troublesome corruption. It's advisable not to sell them or randomly seek out an Artisan to craft items. If you need to, you can sell them to me or let me find an Artisan. Keeping them in the Traveler's Bag is also fine. Compared to the Shadow Branch boxing gloves, Mr. Fool's seal, and the attention and influence of other items on you, they're as weak as an ordinary newborn baby."

Relieved by this response, Lumian took a breath and activated the black mark on his right shoulder, vanishing from the room.

After a while, he materialized atop a bell tower on Avenue du Boulevard in Trier.

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Gazing at the luxurious Champs-élysées in the distance and the already lit lamps, Lumian couldn't hold back any longer. He needed to carefully consider the information he had just obtained from Camus.

With the Berserk Sea, the Feynapotter Kingdom, and half of the Intis Republic between them, Lumian could devise a plan to hunt Hisoka without worrying about the enemy sensing malice and danger!

Perhaps only an Angel could sense over such a distance.

Though Lumian lacked specific information about his target or Hisoka's identity and had no concrete plan, caution was paramount when he had the ability to be cautious.

Relying on his Ascetic trait, he endured, putting aside thoughts of the corresponding matters. Only when far from Port Pylos and the Southern Continent did he carefully consider details, allowing his thoughts to run free.

After an indeterminate amount of time, Lumian vanished from the bell tower.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The pendulum clock struck 7 p.m.

…

The next morning.

Upon entering the hall, Camus spotted Louis Berry, adorned in a golden straw hat, seated on a sofa in the reception area.

Why is he here again? Recalling Kolobo's warning, Camus frowned and approached with concern.

"What can I do for you this time?" he asked calmly, keeping his emotions in check.

Lumian chuckled.

"I need some information, but it won't be from you. Find a reliable teammate who isn't privy to our discussion yesterday evening. Meet me at the Matani Import and Export Shop.

"I can offer 5,000 verl d'or for this."

A peculiar request… 5,000 verl d'or. How generous… Is he trying to avoid a Devil's danger premonition? Camus, an experienced official Beyonder, quickly made the connection.

He refrained from overthinking and pondered for a moment before responding, "Agreed."

Heading into the office area, Lumian rose and departed, making his way to the Matani Import and Export Shop nearby.

Soon, a man sat opposite Lumian, who was savoring his coffee.

The man, with dark hair and a relatively thin build, was a member of the patrol team who had accompanied them to the scene yesterday. Today, he wore dark-black sunglasses, giving him the appearance of a blind individual.

"I'm Kolobo. Camus mentioned a chance to earn 5,000 verl d'or," the patrol team member introduced himself in fluent Intisian.

Amused, Lumian observed Kolobo's demeanor. Taking out a pen and paper, he counted out 5,000 verl d'or notes and slid them over.

"Write down the Prisoner pathway Beyonder's name and details from the patrol team. Ensure I don't catch sight of it. Fold it into a square after writing."

Kolobo, almost as if blind, fumbled for the banknotes.

He bent down and counted, nearly burying his head under the table.

"Why aren't you looking at me?" Lumian asked with curiosity.

Trembling, Kolobo replied, "I fear I might truly go blind."

Are you able to see something you shouldn't? From the Monster pathway? Lumian pondered but refrained from probing further.

Kolobo turned around and swiftly wrote down the corresponding information on the table behind him, folding the paper and passing it to Lumian.

Without a second glance, Lumian promptly received the information and stowed it in his Traveler's Bag.

After settling the bill for his coffee, he headed to the washroom.

His figure vanished once more.

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Chapter 645 "Gifts"

After Louis Berry left the coffee area, Kolobo breathed a sigh of relief. He removed his sunglasses, retrieved the 5,000 verl d'or, and counted it again.

His gut told him this deal would work out. That's the only reason he dared to risk coming to the Matani Import and Export Shop. Still, his whole body had been trembling with fear. He couldn't even keep his eyes open most of the time, and his hands were shaking so badly that he was surprised it was legible.

Trouble always waits until it's ready to explode, he thought, clutching his sunglasses.

He stood up and headed for the door.

Something was wrong. He could feel it. His body tensed with some kind of danger sense he couldn't explain.

His heart raced as he scanned the place professionally, trying to pinpoint the danger. Kolobo's footsteps changed--sometimes fast, sometimes slow. He'd zip off in one direction only to stop short a few paces later.

Kolobo took in the morning sun, the quiet shop that had just opened its doors, and the handful of customers scattered about. Not a single pair of eyes seemed fixed on him, and there was no one lurking in the shadows, observing his every move.

Yet, following his instincts, his feet carried him back to the coffee shop area. That's where he finally stopped, in front of the bathroom sign.

Two years as a Beyonder taught Kolobo the most important lesson: trust your gut. Without thinking, he yanked open the heavy wooden door and walked inside.

The Matani Import and Export Shop wasn't some back-alley dive. This restroom was big. Three urinals, three stalls, and gas lamps flickered on the clean tile.

Kolobo headed to the sink to splash cold water on his face. Maybe that would shake this weird danger feeling that was creeping all over him.

As he looked up, a face stared back at him in the mirror.

But it wasn't his.

The face was freakishly white. The guy looked late twenties, with light brown skin and eyes that flashed a dark, sickly green. He stared at Kolobo with dead, cold eyes.

Kolobo's brain short-circuited as recognition hit.

Twanaku Tupi??n, the only Prisoner pathway Beyonder on their patrol team. The guy had become a Sequence 6 Zombie last year.

He was also the first guy to ever make Kolobo's skin crawl. If he told anyone else, he gut told him he'd end up dead!

When Lumian asked Kolobo to spill the beans about the Prisoner pathway Beyonder on his team, something about it felt wrong. He'd almost bailed on the whole deal. He'd counted that huge 50,000 sum not out of distrust but because he needed time to think, to weigh the risk.

He decided to trust his gut, but he hadn't told Lumian about this feeling, this fear of Tupi??n...

And now, here Twanaku Tupi??n was, reflected in the mirror.

This is a Sequence 5 Wraith power. When did he advance? Kolobo could barely think over the growing horror. Suddenly, his body felt like it'd been dropped into an icy lake.

Twanaku Twanaku's face in the mirror vanished.

Kolobo could barely move. An icy coldness gripped him, the kind that chilled you to the bone.

It wasn't his own hands that were moving--they lifted without him wanting them to. A voice drifted through his ears, flat and emotionless.

"Looks like my cover is blown. You were actually asked to provide my information.

"I'll get out of Port Pylos, but I'm going to leave two gifts for Lumian Lee."

What did that even mean? What kind of gift? And who the heck was Lumian Lee? Kolobo's thoughts were a jumbled mess. His own hands were tightening around his neck.

Then, with a sickening jolt, he realized what "gift" the voice was talking about.

Twanaku Tupi??n was going to kill him and leave a gift--his dead body!

But he said two gifts. What was the other one?

...

In the four-story beige building of the patrol team.

Camus sipped his Highlander coffee and read the West Balam Telegraph, contemplating the deal between Kolobo and Louis Berry.

If successful, as an intermediary, he would receive 20% of the amount.

Knock, knock, knock. A gentle rap echoed on Camus's office door.

"Please come in." Though not particularly young, Camus had ample experience, leading one of the patrol team's operations teams. If there were a vacancy for the vice-captain position, his only competition would be Twanaku Tupi??n of the Prisoner pathway.

The Southern Continent was a chaotic place, especially in an area torn between multiple factions. Whether dealing with the bloodthirsty Rose School of Thought, the ominous Numinous Episcopate, ambitious adventurers, spies from various countries, or missionaries, danger lurked at every corner. Some would take the initiative to assassinate patrol team members, while others would rebel and escape. Meticulous planning was not uncommon, and even the patrol team members found themselves as targets. Consequently, the patrol team faced casualties every year, leading to a constant need for new recruits.

Encountering more attacks had its advantages. Victorious confrontations often yielded valuable items and Beyonder-related ingredients. Many of the patrol team's advancement formulas and potions were acquired in such situations, creating a noteworthy trend.

Compared to cities of similar size in the Northern Continent, Port Pylos had an even greater number of official Beyonders, especially Mid-Sequence Beyonders. However, they lacked higher levels of power or corresponding Sealed Artifacts.

Camus found himself in a tight spot financially due to his rapid advancement outpacing his cousins.

Arriving in Matani State and Port Pylos as a Sequence 9 Arbiter, he had swiftly climbed to a Sequence 7 Justiciar in just five years. His goal was to advance to Sequence 6 and become a Judge, and he had recently been gathering the funds to purchase the necessary materials. If the opportunity to become a vice-captain arose, the patrol team would certainly contribute resources to aid his advancement.

Spoils of war weren't always suitable for him; sometimes, he needed to trade with teammates or sell them to the patrol team for money. He patiently waited for the potion formulas and Beyonder ingredients corresponding to his pathway to appear.

The patrol team, being relatively new, hadn't accumulated substantial reserves. Camus needed to find a way to purchase practical mystical items, regularly replenish charms, potions, and other essentials to stay prepared against assassinations and conflicts.

In such a situation, money was naturally scarce.

Chaos was a path to hell but also a ladder to the top!

Pugilist Sow entered.

With his brown braids gently swaying, Sow, clad in a sky-blue shirt and beige pants, approached Camus with one hand in his pocket, smiling as he asked, "Have you seen Kolobo? I need to discuss something with him."

Camus had already prepared a reason.

"He went to the Import and Export Shop to buy coffee beans."

Sow tersely acknowledged, "Then I'll wait for him to return."

"What's up?" Camus asked casually.

Sow took two steps forward and smiled.

"There's an investigation we would like to involve him in. Maybe he can uncover clues that others can't."

"You bastards, aren't you concerned about Kolobo getting hurt?" Camus replied with amusement, lifting his coffee and taking a sip.

At that moment, Sow withdrew his right hand from his trouser pocket, holding a poker card flickering with a metallic gleam between his thumb and index finger.

The card portrayed a grayish-white clown.

With a swift motion, Sow hurled the poker card at Camus's head.

…

In the men's washroom of the Matani Import and Export Shop.

Kolobo finally caught his reflection in the mirror.

His skin had turned a sickly green, and his hands were locked around his own neck, the pressure making his bones crack. Twanaku Tupián stared back at him from his bright blue eyes.

Kolobo tried to scream, but nothing came out. He wanted to run, but his legs wouldn't move.

It was like his body wasn't his anymore—it was killing him.

Ugh… A choked sound finally escaped Kolobo's throat, too quiet for anyone to hear.

Fear and despair tightened around his heart.

Then, Kolobo's fingers slipped.

A figure emerged from the shadows by the bathroom vents.

Lumian—black hair, green eyes, all dressed in black and white with a golden straw hat.

A flicker of surprise crossed his face, then understanding. He held a black bone flute to his lips.

A hum resounded, accompanied by a melancholic tune echoing from the dark red holes.

Symphony of Hatred!

Why did I only sense malice and danger now… Just as this thought crossed Twanaku's mind, Twanaku's murderous intent exploded, fueled by the haunting melody.

Silently, a figure peeled away from Kolobo's body. It was Twanaku Tupián, his light brown skin gone deathly pale.

Blood vessels bulged in his yellow eyes, threatening to burst.

The Symphony of Hatred tore into Kolobo, already weak with fear.

His heart almost stopped. He crumpled to the floor, barely alive.

Lumian stopped the melody. Holding the black bone flute, he slid back into the shadows and under the vent.

A moment later, he reappeared behind Twanaku Tupián, who was practically vibrating with murderous intent. Lumian lifted the flute, its blood-colored holes gleaming ominously, and took a breath.

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Chapter 646 Indoor Fight

Twanaku Tupián's ears rang, his eyes stinging with blood. His mind burned, his thoughts scattering like sparks. For an agonizing moment, he couldn't process his situation, couldn't even think about the enemy closing in.

Blood, smelling strangely metallic, trickled from his eyes and nose. His pale skin darkened ominously.

"Ha!"

Lumian spat a blast of pale-yellow light, hitting the suspected Hisoka from barely two meters away.

Twanaku's eyes slammed shut, and he collapsed. Before he hit the ground, Lumian's Symphony of Hatred, a black bone flute, jabbed towards his neck.

Instantly, the tiled bathroom floor dissolved into a vast, muddy expanse of darkness. Arms burst upward.

Some were stripped of skin, all raw muscle and glistening tendon. Others twisted and ghostly, pale and transparent. Some bore bulging eyes that spun madly, others sprouted thick green growths…

The grotesque limbs tore at Lumian and Twanaku, clawing and dragging.

This was Twanaku's spell, a death-type enchantment once called Vengeful Wraith's Entanglement, meant to summon an undead horde to paralyze his targets.

But as a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Devil pathway, his power twisted the spell into something new—the Fallen Abyss!

He could alter a space in advance, allowing undead or fallen creatures to lurk beneath the surface. Anyone unfortunate enough to step inside would be grabbed by unseen arms and dragged into the muddy, pitch-black depths. The Abyss would slow and weaken its victims, the icy touch of the undead stealing their strength with agonizing speed. If they were pulled all the way under, they'd be corrupted and lost.

Twanaku had cast this spell in the bathroom before attacking Kolobo. He hadn't wanted any nosy employees or customers to stumble on the scene, but it turned out to be a lucky break. That's why he'd appeared in the mirror instead of right inside Kolobo's eyes.

Lumian's attack with the Symphony of Hatred came to an abrupt halt.

Countless arms wrapped around his ankles, calves, hips, and torso. A wave of icy stiffness washed over him, his movements turning sluggish.

It was the same for Twanaku. With the Wraith and Desire Apostle unconscious, the Fallen Abyss slipped from his control, leaving him vulnerable. His limp body was seized by the strange arms and dragged to the ground.

Nearby, Kolobo, badly injured and out for the count, was pulled into the muddy, pitch-black depths of the illusory Abyss.

A burst of crimson flames exploded from Lumian's body, surrounding him like a blazing cloak.

The flames roared, scorching most of the arms into retreat. Still, some remained unaffected, their grip relentless. A creeping coldness numbed Lumian's body, but he regained a sliver of his former agility.

Before, he could have simply lunged forward, thrusting the black bone flute towards his enemy's neck. But now, the target—the one he believed was Hisoka—was about to vanish into the ground.

Thud!

Twanaku slammed into the ground, the impact jarring him awake. The Spell of Harrumph's grip faded, and he finally regained his senses.

His toughest moment, that relentless surge of desire, was behind him.

Lumian lowered his head, a single scornful sound escaping him.

"Hmph!"

Twin beams of white light shot out while Lumian retracted his hands, fingers slipping back into his Traveler's Bag.

The beams missed their mark, but horrifying, bloody arms sprouted from the ground, a gruesome forest that blocked Twanaku from their path.

With a flash of awareness, Twanaku seized control of the Fallen Abyss spell, shielding himself and attacking his enemy.

The arms hit by the Spell of Harrumph softened, sinking back into the pitch-black mud as if drained.

Twanaku took his chance. His body twisted, morphing into a dark, oozing malevolence, a shape born from the darkest shadows of his heart.

Silently, Twanaku transformed into an illusory, viscous, and foul black liquid, merging with the muddy Abyss and vanishing.

The evil arms, unfazed by the flames, clung to Lumian, limiting his movement.

His hands flew to his Traveler's Bag, pulling out a suit of gleaming silver armor.

He set the armor beside him, sinking it firmly into the pitch-black mud.

Pride Armor!

Evil, writhing arms erupted from the illusory Abyss—and the corresponding spirit world. Guided by the spell, they lunged for the Pride Armor, seizing its ankles, legs, torso, and back.

The Pride Armor struck back, a broadsword of pure light flashing in its hand. Blinding, holy light flooded the washroom.

The shadowy arms recoiled with hisses of black smoke, retreating into the depths.

The pitch-black mud dissolved, revealing the bathroom's stone tiles.

Kolobo, who'd been on the brink of sinking into the Abyss, lay unconscious on the floor.

Just meters away, near the washroom door, a figure of viscous black liquid prepared to flee.

Now free, Twanaku came to a swift decision.

He wouldn't waste time trying to possess Lumian Lee. Instead, he'd abandon the Matani Import and Export Shop—and Port Pylos!

It was a trap. He had to escape before it closed around him. Staying to fight back was foolish—he couldn't risk lingering just to satisfy his rage and murderous desire.

That would be far too dangerous!

Twanaku was glad he'd chosen to give Lumian Lee those two "gifts". He'd even divided his favorite mystical items to do it. The patrol team should be in chaos by now, focused on a false target.

The distraction would give him his chance to escape.

Before, Twanaku hadn't been focused on killing Camus. His priority was taking out Kolobo and escaping. If everything went smoothly, there shouldn't be problems for either side. Any chaos caused by Camus's death would be a bonus—

distracting the enemy by having the other passing off as the real deal.

He'd sent that extra "gift" as a precaution, not some bloodthirsty urge!

…

In Camus's office, nestled inside the patrol team's beige four-

story building, a poker card shimmered with metallic light as it hurtled towards him. Coffee was the last thing on his mind. He dove behind his desk with a surge of adrenaline, planning to send the table flying back at Sow before blasting him with Psychic Piercing.

The joker-faced card soared over Camus's head, missing its target.

But then, as if it had a mind of its own, the card swerved and plunged down, aiming for Camus's back.

It seemed to melt right into him, vanishing in a flash.

Sow's grin stretched wider. He strode to the desk, yanking the broadsword from his back.

…

Inside the men's bathroom of the Matani Import and Export Shop.

A figure made of thick, black liquid slipped through the crack under the door then strangely reformed in its original spot.

Bottle of Fiction!

The moment Lumian harbored malice and took out the Symphony of Hatred from the Traveler's Bag, Lumian had used this bathroom vent as a base, using the Bottle of Fiction to set one condition: only females could enter or exit!

That way, innocent customers wouldn't stumble into the dangerous Beyonder battle. And Hisoka couldn't escape without destroying the Bottle of Fiction first!

The black, liquid figure spread toward the vent, dodging the two white beams from Lumian.

Twanaku was done with dodging. His body swelled and warped, transforming into a monstrous giant almost three meters tall.

The monster's skin turned a dull, dark shade, and a pair of curved goat horns marked with strange patterns sprouted from his head. Colossal bat wings wreathed in blue and crimson flames lashed out, releasing a stinging, sulfurous stench.

Devil Transformation!

This was the signature power of a Sequence 6 Devil from the Prisoner pathway—a boost to strength, speed, defense… everything.

Lumian knew his target, the one he thought was Hisoka, was on high alert, braced to dodge his Spell of Harrumph. He stopped using it.

He decided against the Symphony of Hatred too. The situation was different.

Before, his enemy had been fueled by bloodlust in his murder attempt on Kolobo, a perfect trigger. Now, there was only a cold, emotionless focus.

With no guarantee that the Symphony of Hatred would work

—or that it wouldn't backfire—Lumian wasn't taking that chance.

Instead, a crimson spear sparked into existence. From a few meters away, he hurled it at the suspected Hisoka.

The second the spear left his hand, Lumian vanished.

He couldn't stay put. Possession by the Wraith, a mind-

shattering psychic blast from a Desire Apostle, some twisted desire spell—any of those were a risk!

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Chapter 647 "Inexplicable Action"

In the face of the flaming spear, Twanaku's eyes, now crimson from the Devil Transformation, reflected dancing and burning crimson flames.

He remained unfazed. Instead, he conjured an aberration--a broadsword made of crimson magma and pale-blue flames.

Swiftly turning, Twanaku exposed his back to the flaming spear. With the magma broadsword in hand, he slashed at the foe who had seemingly teleported behind him, launching an attack.

The broadsword, adorned with crimson magma and pale-blue flames, sliced through the air but missed Lumian. It left only an exaggerated mark on the wall behind, a testament to its destructive force.

Had it not been for the Bottle of Fiction's protection, the bathroom wall would have been split in half. Even so, the bottle visibly trembled, bearing some damage.

The nearly white flaming spear also struck Twanaku's back, piercing a little before being halted by the elastic dark skin and sturdy flesh. It failed to penetrate the Devil's body, leaving only blackened traces from the resulting inferno.

Devils, armored in thick and tough natural protection, were resistant to flames, poison, and curses to a certain extent. Twanaku, in his Zombie state, possessed a steel-like body that could withstand bullets and cannonballs. Lumian's flaming spear and fireball attacks, as well as the Fire Ravens' onslaught, posed little threat. Standing still, Twanaku could endure repeated attacks without suffering severe injuries.

Additionally, his ability to transform into a Wraith allowed him to evade explosions effortlessly.

"Hisoka" Twanaku believed that, without the support of the Tarot Club, the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, and powerful demigods, he could have tortured Lumian to death. Even with teleportation, spells rendering him temporarily unconscious, and mystical items, most of Lumian's attacks were ineffective against Wraiths and Desire Apostle Beyonders. The Psychic Shock and Desire Detonation further restrained him, leaving him vulnerable to the assaults of Wraiths and undead creatures.

Having missed his strike, Twanaku noticed Lumian's figure reappear in midair.

As anticipated, Lumian had chosen to teleport behind and launch an attack. However, there was a notable change compared to previous encounters.

Hovering near the ceiling and the vent, Lumian opened his mouth and emitted a harrumph.

The moment a pale-yellow light shot out, Hisoka Twanaku's figure faded and vanished.

In Lumian's pupils, a devilish figure materialized--dark skin, long goat horns, bat wings on its back, and no longer wielding the Sword of Lava.

Swiftly, Twanaku transformed into a Wraith, leaping into Lumian's eyes, deftly dodging the Spell of Harrumph's attack.

Devil Transformation didn't impede his Wraith abilities!

Lumian's face paled, a dark-green hue tinting his features. His hands involuntarily rose, reaching for his neck, and his body plummeted to the ground.

Prepared for such a situation, Lumian didn't resist. While he could still struggle, he didn't halt his hands or resist the Wraith's control. Instead, he sank his consciousness into his right hand.

The frenzied, bloody aura of superiority dissipated slightly, causing Twanaku to instinctively tremble.

He subconsciously detached from Lumian's body and leaped onto the sink.

Lumian activated the black mark on his right shoulder, vanishing before crashing to the ground.

This time, he appeared behind the motionless silver-white full-body armor.

Behind!

The Pride Armor spun around abruptly, raising the broadsword of light and slashing at Lumian in the not-too-small bathroom. Lumian employed Spirit World Traversal once more, vanishing from the silver armor's path.

Within the mirror, "Hisoka" Twanaku was somewhat bewildered.

Why did Lumian Lee provoke his Sealed Artifact and engage in combat with it?

Am I not his enemy target?

The negative effects of a Sealed Artifact?

Though he didn't understand what was going on, Twanaku sensed danger instinctively.

His Danger Premonition, along with a possible insight from Emperor Roselle--"If something shows signs of abnormality, there must be an abnormal factor hidden.

Such factors often signify danger."

Without hesitation, Twanaku left the sink and leaped to the bathroom door in his colossal Devil form.

Conjuring a dozen or so light-blue Sulfur Fireballs, he directed them at the wooden door in unison.

Twanaku, who had shaken the Bottle of Fiction with his sword, knew that the current seal could be broken by brute force. There was no need to find the true exit or kill the enemy who had constructed the seal.

For this reason, he chose to forgo teaming up with the full-body armor to assail Lumian.

He reckoned that any further delay, even if Lumian Lee were to fall on the spot, would lead to him being surrounded, facing a lethal blow with no chance of escaping alive.

In such a scenario, killing Lumian Lee would render the effort meaningless!

Certainly, Twanaku wasn't about to let Lumian off easily. Following the Sulfur Fireball assault, he clenched his fists and spoke a word in Devil language filled with depravity and filth.

"Slow!"

This was a manifestation of the Language of Foulness, capable of stiffening and even halting the movements of targets within a seven- to eight-meter radius for approximately two seconds.

Considering the bathroom's size, this radius covered the entire area.

Lumian's form reappeared.

Once more, he teleported behind the Pride Armor, conjuring a crimson fireball almost white in his hand.

Influenced by the Language of Foulness, both Lumian and the Pride Armor moved sluggishly. One "slowly" launched a fireball, while the other struggled to turn around, as if its joints had rusted.

Rumble!

The Sulfur Fireballs erupted against the bathroom door.

A translucent, illusory membrane materialized on the bathroom's side. Like glass, it shattered inch by inch, leaving crisscrossing marks that teetered on the brink of collapse.

The wooden door appeared charred and pieced together, reminiscent of a child's broken toy hastily glued back together.

Observing this, "Hisoka" Twanaku grasped that another strike could completely shatter the seal.

This time, he gathered seven to eight light-blue Sulfur Fireballs.

On the opposite end, Lumian's fireball finally collided with the Pride Armor's back, assisted by the explosive waves.

Amidst the rumbling and clanging, the silver armor stiffened.

Lumian activated the black mark on his right shoulder once more and teleported away from his current location.

Almost simultaneously, the Pride Armor overcame the effects of Slow with abnormal swiftness, swiftly turning around.

However, it still couldn't lock onto its target.

Twanaku felt a surge of amusement bubbling within him but maintained an unusual vigilance. His only wish was that the relentless bombardment would shatter the seal completely, granting him an avenue for escape.

In the next moment, the Sulfur Fireballs collided with the wooden door at the bathroom entrance. Twanaku witnessed the silver-white full-body armor squat down, driving the broadsword of light into the ground.

Wh— Twanaku's pupils dilated as he instinctively readied himself to transform into a Wraith.

Yet, he held back, exercising restraint. Aware of the potential consequences within the Warrior pathway, he understood the risk of subjecting himself to even greater harm.

Rumble!

Simultaneously with the explosion of the Sulfur Fireballs, the Sword of Dawn, embedded in the crevice in the stone tiles by the Pride Armor, disintegrated into fragments of light. Densely packed, they formed a flickering, violent, and sharp hurricane that swept in all directions, filled with the intent to annihilate everything.

Hurricane of Light!

Since it couldn't lock onto the backstabber, it opted for a wide-ranging assault!

The sharp and terrifying storm of light enveloped Twanaku and Kolobo on the ground. Lumian materialized in front of the latter, crouched down, shielding vital

points. He faced the formidable hurricane head-on.

The washroom bore the brunt of the assault. The urinal was wrecked, and the cubicles silently collapsed, shedding a layer of bricks.

As a depraved creature, Twanaku had nowhere to hide. All he could do was endure the damage, his eyes flickering with a sharp light.

In the radiant blades' storm, Lumian's figure cracked inch by inch, shattering into numerous mirror fragments.

Mirror Substitution!

With his obstruction, Kolobo avoided fatal injuries but couldn't escape multiple bleeding wounds.

…

In Camus's office, within the beige four-story building housing the patrol team.

Crouched behind a table, Camus's face turned pale, tinged with a dark-green hue. It was as if a grayish-white clown laughed exaggeratedly in his eyes.

Camus strained to ignite bolts of lightning in his eyes, piercing Sow's mind. His betraying teammate grimaced in pain, causing his broadsword to lose strength and direction, crashing into the desk and failing to hit Camus.

In that critical moment, Camus drew a silver revolver from his right hand, aiming it not at Sow but at himself.

Across the street, in a room facing Camus's office,

Jenna, holding a telescope, huddled by the curtain, closely monitored Camus's condition.

Seeing the other party under attack and struggling, she swiftly grabbed the loudspeaker she had prepared and brought it to her mouth.

"Camus has been attacked!

"Camus has been attacked by the Rose School of Thought!

"Camus is being attacked in his office!"

The loudspeaker's sound reverberated through every room of the patrol team.

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Chapter 648 Teamwork

On the top floor of the beige building belonging to the patrol team, a middle-aged man in a thin black suit heard Jenna's voice.

Without bothering to trace the source of the shout, he stood up abruptly and retrieved a white human skull, seemingly carved from crystal, from his hidden pocket.

The man, a mix of Intis and West Balam lineage, held the crystal skull and recited a mysterious language with a strong sense of death.

In the next moment, a decaying palm extended from the void in front of him. Its joints were thick, and its skin was bleeding, revealing signs of decay.

The palm belonged to a corpse that looked vaguely human but, upon closer inspection, resembled a monster.

Over 1.8 meters tall, its face concealed by a rusty bronze mask, and its torso composed of corpses from various species, including lions, tigers, black wolves, baboons, giant serpents, vultures, and humans themselves--all in a severe state of rot.

The corpse's bronze mask flickered with dark-red lights in its eyes as it took a step forward, arriving in Camus's office.

Faced with Camus, who had a revolver in his right hand, staggering toward his forehead, the monstrous corpse removed its bronze mask.

Underneath the mask, there was no nose, flesh, or bones. Only two dark-red balls of light and a mouth that occupied four-fifths of the head.

The mouth opened wide, revealing a pitch-black interior.

A terrifying suction force emanated from the mouth, affecting Camus's spirit but having no effect on the documents, newspapers, and other items on the desk. It only caused Camus's spirit to surface, as if pulled by an invisible force, about to be plunged into hell.

As Camus's Spirit Body materialized, the grayish-white clown seeped out of his flesh, revealing its complete form--a magnified, illusory poker card.

The poker card had no body of its own and was swiftly drawn out by the pitch-black mouth beneath the bronze mask. Camus's Spirit Body struggled.

Smack!

The poker card materialized and fell to the ground, emitting the sound of a heavy object colliding with solid bricks, but there was no metallic sound.

...

In the Matani Import and Export Shop, the male bathroom lay in ruins. The door and the wall facing the corridor crumbled into fragments, scattering for several meters, as if a storm had passed through.

The Bottle of Fiction had lost its effect.

Amidst the residual fragments of light and the lingering sulfur smell, Twanaku rolled out in his Devil form.

His pitch-black skin bore hideous wounds, and his flesh seemed to evaporate. Half of the two curved goat horns on his head were gone, and viscous black liquid flowed from the cracks.

The bat-like wings on his back were tattered and drooping.

With Twanaku's formidable physical strength, the Hurricane of Light from the Pride Armor shouldn't have caused such tragic and severe damage, but he was a Devil.

The Hurricane of Light possessed the unique ability to destroy evil creatures and undead beings.

It was like Twanaku undergoing purification while being sliced by a fragmentary blade. What made it more potent was their collaboration. Purification weakened defense and inflicted harm on the evil creature's spirit and flesh, while the fragmentary blade utilized purification to weaken defense and cut through flesh. The more wounds and the deeper they were, the better the purification effect.

Had Twanaku not resisted in his Devil form and instead transformed into a Wraith, he might have faced severe injury, teetering on the brink of death, or even elimination.

The Hurricane of Light could vanquish Wraiths and injure evil spirits.

Despite being severely injured, Twanaku, still capable of combat, calmly suppressed his tyrannical and bloodthirsty emotions. Realizing he had escaped the seal, he prepared to transform into a Wraith and escape through the surrounding mirrors.

Just as he made this decision, a sudden sense of Danger Premonition struck him.

The malice came from behind, and in the shadows outside the bathroom, Franca, dressed in an Assassin suit, emerged, raising her left hand.

On her left thumb, she wore an iron-colored ring with a thick band and a surface covered in small spikes--Ring of Punishment!

Franca's lake-blue eyes flickered with lightning, moving many times faster than the fastest bullets, shooting out silently with

Psychic Piercing!

Hidden Blade... Why do I only sense her malice now... The severely injured Twanaku couldn't dodge in time and suddenly heard an illusory shattering sound.

The shattering sound echoed from Twanaku's Spirit Body, and intense pain flooded his mind, compelling him to raise his hands to cover his head.

Seizing the opportunity, Franca swiftly took out a mirror and reflected Twanaku in his Devil form.

Black flames ignited in her left palm as she smeared it across the mirror's surface--

Demoness's curse!

Black flames erupted from Twanaku's body, but nearly two-thirds were suppressed by his flesh and blood, leaving only a portion of the colossal Devil's Spirit Body to be incinerated.

Being a Devil, immune to curses to a certain extent, helped Twanaku endure the Demoness's curse better, given his already ravaged state from the Hurricane of Light.

Finally free from the influence of Psychic Piercing, Twanaku, with his Spirit Body engulfed in black flames, transformed into a pitch-black, viscous liquid.

These liquids seemed to originate from the darkest corners of the human heart, representing the most sinister and shadowy desires and emotions.

Twanaku abandoned Wraith Form, choosing Desire Apostle's Desire Incarnation because Demoness's black flames targeted the Spirit Body more.

Before the pitch-black viscous liquid could fully elongate into a human figure, he fled into the nearby darkness, sensing a strong Danger Premonition in his heart.

At the corridor's entrance, Anthony Reid, donned in military-

green attire, appeared in a blind spot.

His eyes took on a faint golden hue, transforming into vertical pupils—Psychological Invisibility!

Frenzy!

Twanaku's mind buzzed, instantly breaking free from his Desire Incarnation state. Bloodshot eyes and livor mortis appeared on his body, emitting sulfurous blood.

He entered a frenzied state. Already grievously injured and subjected to Psychic Piercing and the Demoness's curse, he was on the verge of losing control.

Rumble!

Light-blue sulfur fireballs pelted the surroundings, propelled by Twanaku's wild instincts.

Franca's form quickly shattered into mirror fragments, while Anthony's body sprouted grayish-white dragon scales. He leaped toward the wall for cover.

Rumble!

Using up Franca's Mirror Substitution, Lumian teleported behind the frenzied Twanaku.

Having already unleashed the accumulated spirituality and strength within him, Lumian's spirituality surged, no longer drained.

Enduring the scorching sulfur flames and the blast's impact, Lumian focused on the oblivious, frenzied Twanaku. He harrumphed.

Two beams of white light shot from his nose, hitting what appeared to be Hisoka.

Twanaku collapsed, and the signs of madness began to fade.

Lumian didn't allow him to reach the ground. Extending his right hand, he grabbed Twanaku by the shoulder and teleported him into the spirit world!

In seconds, Lumian materialized at the edge of the primitive forest near Port Pylos.

Even during this process, he let out a harrumph. The pale-

yellow light emitted from his mouth knocked Twanaku out again, preventing him from regaining consciousness.

At that moment, a woman stood at the edge of the primitive forest. It was Hela, dressed like a black widow but not as distant as before.

Observing Twanaku, no longer in his colossal Devil state but emitting a sulfuric scent, with dark patterns on his skin, Hela nodded at Lumian and said, "It should be Hisoka."

Every time Hisoka participated in the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, he only disguised himself superficially. If Hisoka's true identity was targeted, Hela, who was responsible for providing the gathering venue and entrance method,

could still recognize him.

"Ha!" Lumian chuckled and added a new Spell of Harrumph to Hisoka.

Hela seized his arm and chanted an incantation.

The two of them, along with Hisoka, vanished like pencil drawings erased by an eraser.

In the ancient and dilapidated palace of the Nation of the Evernight.

As Lumian emerged from his concealed state, he harrumphed.

Two beams of white light descended, and Hisoka remained unconscious.

Hela's tone chilled as she remarked, "I'll let you enter the same dream."

"Thank you." Lumian released Hisoka, reclining against a broken stone pillar.

Moments later, his thoughts blurred until he heard Hela's voice.

"It's done."

Lumian snapped back, gazing into the interrogation room where Hisoka sat opposite.

This member of the Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, Twanaku Tupián, bore light-brown skin, a blend of Northern and Southern Continent descent. His eyes gleamed flaxen, his hair dark. While not unattractive, his demeanor exuded indifference to life.

At the sight, Lumian's lips curved into a smile.

He had sought Hela's assistance primarily to craft an environment where he could safely unveil his plans after capturing Hisoka alive.

Otherwise, restraining Hisoka's resistance would have posed a significant challenge. Communicating with him would have been impossible if he remained unconscious until his demise. Destroying Hisoka's frontal lobe would strip away frustration, pain, and resentment, making it difficult to fulfill the requirements of the Reaper ritual.

Upon spotting Lumian, Hisoka suddenly struggled, but an invisible force held him back, preventing his transformation into a Wraith.

This was a dream controlled by Hela.

Hisoka calmed down and gazed at Lumian, posing the greatest question on his mind, "How did you manage to evade my Danger Premonition?"

Lumian's smile deepened. He looked down at Hisoka and said casually, "No need for a Demon Hunter's assistance. A sufficient distance and a Hypnotist would do the trick."

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Chapter 649 Conspiracy Showcase

Sufficient distance and a Hypnotist... Hisoka repeated Lumian's words as if he had realized something.

Lumian stood in front of him, looking down, and questioned, "Do you think that, apart from Demon Hunters and higher-level Beyonders of the corresponding pathway, Devils mainly get killed based on chance encounters in battles?"

Hisoka regarded Lumian with indifference and remained silent.

Lumian pulled up a chair and sat down, crossing his right foot over his left knee. Casually, he said, "I've read a mysticism book about Devils. It's filled with numerous cases of hunting Devils.

"It's clear that Beyonders of most pathways rely on chance encounters to kill specific Devils. That's what I believed back then. However, when I revisited the detailed description of Devil abilities, I found a contradiction.

"This is how the mysticism book describes your Danger Premonition:

"Danger Premonition, also known as Malicious Perception--if an enemy can soon cause lethal harm to a Devil and takes clear action to do so, a Devil can sense the danger in advance and grasp the source. They can target it, kill it, take revenge, or escape, but it's impossible to know the exact details of the plan. Different Devils have different intuition ranges--from a few minutes to a day, from a few kilometers to as wide as a city."

"What's the contradiction between this and a battle encounter?" Hisoka asked, sitting upright, cold and curious.

"According to this description, Devils can indeed sense a battle encounter," Lumian said with a smile. "For example, even though I only intended to have a cup of coffee today and suddenly encountered a Devil, and had no choice but to kill him. For that Devil, it's literal. He should have sensed that my coffee-drinking at the caf?? would pose a fatal danger to him in advance and that it would happen, but that's not the case in reality."

Observing Hisoka's thoughtful expression, Lumian clasped his hands together.

"This means that a Devil's Danger Premonition doesn't stem from fate. If it were a powerful Beyonder of the Monster pathway, there's a high chance they would suddenly feel that coffee isn't suitable today and avoid danger. But you can't.

"Since a Devil's Danger Premonition doesn't stem from precognition of fate, where does it stem from?

"Once, a high-ranking Demon enlightened me about the concept of the Abyss. According to its perspective, the Abyss holds two dimensions. The first is physical, with an entrance hidden somewhere in the real world. The second is in the mind, with an entrance nestled deep within everyone's hearts.

"Considering this insight, I believe we need to tweak the foundation of a Devil's Danger Premonition.

"It kicks in only when an adversary has a well-defined plan capable of inflicting fatal harm on a Devil soon. That's when the Devil can sense it beforehand.

"Got it? A more distinct thought process or intent."

Lumian adopted the cadence of Madam Magician to taunt Hisoka, weaving the narrative of his conspiracy.

"In the beginning, I probed bit by bit and investigated step by step. When I stumbled upon crucial information, I purposely skirted around it, leaving me in the dark about who I was dealing with and without a rough plan to handle the target.

"In simpler terms, I didn't have clear thoughts or intentions, and there was no effective plan to cause lethal harm to you anytime soon. Everything was vague, chaotic, and uncommitted, filled with variation and accidents, ensuring you couldn't naturally sense danger.

"However, your position alerted you when I delved into the serial murder from four years ago. Since then, you've been using a Wraith's ability and the patrol team members under your control to keep a vigilant eye on this matter, right?"

Hisoka listened coldly, showing no intention of responding.

Lumian smiled and continued, "After figuring out that you were hiding in the patrol team as a Zombie Sequence Beyonder, I resisted my urges and tried my best not to dwell on such matters. When I returned to the hotel, I immediately teleported to Trier.

"At this distance, you won't be able to sense that I'm formulating a plan and putting it into practice.

"After coming up with a preliminary plan, I went to Hidden Blade and my two other companions to discuss a detailed plan. It was just past 7 p.m. Trier time.

"The next move involved assigning tasks. Each of us had a role to play. We underwent a Hypnotist's Hypnotism, erasing our true purpose from memory. Only when a Devil like you emerged would we recall the specific details.

"My mission was to use teleportation, making it seem like I left, only to return stealthily using shadow concealment. I trailed the patrol team member I interacted with, believing that I was checking if there was anything problematic with him.

"Hidden Blade's mission was to tail me, providing necessary vigilance and support. If I activated the Bottle of Fiction ability, she'd preemptively don the Ring of Punishment and lie in wait outside. The reason for her ambush eluded her until she laid eyes on you. With her combat prowess and intelligence, she instinctively knew what steps to take. No need for me to give detailed instructions.

"The Hypnotist's mission involved using Psychological Invisibility to wander the vicinity, just aimlessly wandering.

"As for the other Demoness, her duty was to monitor the patrol team and promptly report any issues to the authorities. Before your arrival, she too was unaware of the real reason behind her actions. She simply thought we had plans involving the patrol team.

"Before the Hypnotism wore off, none of us had intentions of confronting you. Our individual actions couldn't pose lethal harm to you, ensuring you couldn't foresee it.

"This was a premeditated encounter, a clash pitting you against multiple adversaries."

With that final sentence, Lumian suddenly heard an illusory shattering sound.

He sensed that his Conspirer potion had been fully digested.

He also felt Hisoka's seemingly cold expression, vexation, and regret growing, gnawing at his heart.

Lumian's smile widened. He stood up, leaned forward, and inched his head in front of Hisoka. He looked into Hisoka's bloodshot flaxen-colored eyes and said, "Your biggest mistake was not leaving Port Pylos ahead of time and sticking with the patrol team.

"Why are you so certain I won't track you down?"

"How do you know I enjoy Fermo coffee without sugar?" Hisoka inquired instead of answering.

Sensing his intense anger and killing intent, Lumian straightened up and replied with a smile, "My sister always says that wherever you go, you leave a trace, and I have an expert at finding traces with me.

"Heh heh, Emperor Roselle must have said something similar. You must know what it means."

Hisoka's hands tightened on the chair's armrests as he asked again, "Why were you so sure I'll kill Kolobo?"

Lumian replied with a sense of satisfaction, "I wasn't certain.

"Didn't I mention I had a Demoness companion monitoring the patrol team?

"Hidden Blade and I believed that if you ultimately choose to escape, you will definitely do something to vent your murderous desires. Otherwise, something might happen to you, considering your Devil and Prisoner pathways. And since you want to kill someone, it's either the patrol team member who traded with me or Camus who gave me the information. It's either at the Matani Shop or in the patrol team."

At this juncture, Lumian guessed with a smile, "You took the gamble of staying in Port Pylos and the patrol team because you wanted to seize an opportunity to kill me? Under the watchful eyes of the Tarot Club and Curly-Haired Baboons Research Society, finding a chance to eliminate a promising young man like me and escape unscathed can satisfy your twisted mind to the fullest extent?"

Hisoka subconsciously licked his lips.

"I initially planned to bide my time, waiting for your patience to wear thin and an opportune moment to present itself. But it seems you didn't seek the assistance of the demigods; you only reached out to Hela.

"I should have struck last night."

Hisoka didn't conceal his frustration.

Lumian didn't immediately address the topic. After a few moments of contemplation, he said,

"Waiting for an opportunity… You're quite confident in concealing your identity. Unafraid of normal investigations,

"Is it because the higher-ups of the patrol team allowed a Sequence 6 of the Prisoner pathway to join?"

Hisoka sealed his lips, responding with silence.

"Seems there's a significant secret lurking here." Lumian suddenly sensed a conspiracy. "Is the opportunity you're waiting for connected to this secret?"

Hisoka maintained silence, his eyes transformed, now bloodthirsty and filled with a desire to kill.

"Not willing to share?" Lumian chuckled. "No problem. Let's discuss something else first."

He bent down again, looking at Hisoka.

"In this operation, I sought only Hela. Firstly, to guard against the Nois family Demons who had made contact with you. Secondly, to create an environment for a quiet conversation with you."

At the mention of the Nois family's Demons, Hisoka's gaze subtly shifted.

"How do you know?"

Lumian didn't reply. The corners of his mouth curled up even more.

"I chose Hela because I wanted to capture you alive, relying on my own strength and that of my companions.

"Each of us is weaker than you, and each of us is someone you think you can easily kill. However, as a team, through teamwork, we've put you in a tight spot. You'll descend into hell."

Hisoka shattered the chair's armrest, but he couldn't attack Lumian.

Observing his bloodshot eyes, Lumian retrieved a golden straw hat from his Traveler's Bag, pressed it to his chest, and bowed.

"I'll excuse myself for a moment," he said with a smile.

In the next moment, Lumian left the dream.

Swiftly shifting his sitting position, he leaned against a broken stone pillar. From his Traveler's Bag, he retrieved Gardner Martin's Beyonder characteristic, teeth, blood, Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard's venom, hornbeam essential oil, and other items.

He had genuinely sensed Hisoka's fear, anger, and frustration. Although it occurred in a dream, it was reflected in Hisoka's brain and body, real and intense.

He was about to concoct the Reaper potion.

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Chapter 650 Reaper

In the ancient, crumbling palace of the Nation of the Evernight, Lumian carefully poured Gardner Martin's blood into a measuring cylinder and added the unusually sharp, small white bone blade that emitted a cold light.

During this process, he moved swiftly, paying no attention to the bone-blade-shaped Beyonder characteristic slicing his fingers and causing blood to flow. Instead, he ignited crimson flames, helping the wounds contract and preventing the white bone blade from entering the potion with his blood.

The physical pain heightened Lumian's clarity and excitement. He added Gardner Martin's two teeth, the Colorful Bearded Horned Lizard's venom, and the hornbeam essential oil into the bright red blood.

Bloop! Bloop! Bubbles bubbled in the blood, and the items mysteriously dissolved.

Soon, black iron dregs emerged from the bright-red blood, as if an iron weapon had shattered inside.

Lumian glanced at the still-slumbering "Hisoka" Twanaku, picked up the measuring cylinder, and poured the liquid into his mouth.

The pungent smell of blood, the unfamiliar taste of rust, and the burning sensation instantly filled Lumian's mouth and pierced his brain.

It felt like being caught in a chaotic war, constantly facing blades, firearms, and relentless enemy assaults. Wounds appeared all over his body, throbbing with pain.

Son of a sow, am I being attacked by a potion? Lumian muttered, bewildered, as he found himself locked in combat with a swarm of oncoming adversaries.

Fireballs, Fire Ravens, and blazing white spears shattered, tore through, or impaled the enemies, turning them into torches that illuminated the battlefield.

After an unknown span of time, Lumian felt his strength waning, his spiritual energy on the brink of exhaustion. The accumulated spirituality of an Ascetic had long been unleashed.

In that moment, a colossal figure materialized before him, radiating a formidable and intimidating aura.

Despite Lumian's weakening state, he sensed the colossal figure's fear, hatred, and frustration.

He's afraid of me... Lumian realized suddenly. Summoning the last shreds of his courage, he condensed a blazing white flaming spear and hurled it at the colossal figure.

A blinding white flame erupted, piercing through the colossal figure's head.

Rumble. The giant figure exploded from within, shattering into countless fragments.

Rumble. The entire battlefield crumbled.

Lumian shook off the daze and found himself in front of a crumbling ancient palace, its stone bricks weathered by time. Hisoka Twanaku still slumbered, and Hela stood silently by his side.

Sweat dripped from Lumian's body, bursting into crimson sparks.

Eventually, the sweat returned to normal.

Phew... Lumian let out a relieved breath. His spirituality was rapidly recovering.

He had advanced to become a Reaper.

Having completed the ritual of capturing a higher Sequence enemy alive and revealing his conspiracy, Lumian had consumed the potion and advanced to Sequence 5, a Reaper of the Hunter pathway.

Compared to his previous Sequences, Reaper bestowed three additional abilities:

The first, Weakness Investigation, allowed Lumian to discern the target's vulnerabilities and weak points in their defenses from a mystic perspective.

The second, Cull, could be infused into any attack to harvest the target's life. Any part struck by Cull was akin to an assault on vital points and weaknesses, dealing significant damage.

If Cull hit a genuine weakness or vital point, it could deliver a fatal blow, making it challenging for the target to withstand three consecutive attacks.

It could even inflict real damage on demigod-level creatures, provided they didn't block or successfully evade, and refrained from using mystic defenses.

The third, Precision, enabled Lumian to precisely target a predetermined location and manipulate fireballs, Fire Ravens, and other spells that had left his body.

He could split a colossal fireball into hundreds, striking different targets with precision, achieving effective area-of-effect damage.

It was a far cry from a blanket explosion, being more efficient and effective.

Both Cull and Precision demanded a substantial amount of spirituality, rivaling Lumian's current usage of teleportation.

The exception was the combination of Precision and Fire Raven, as Fire Raven could allocate a bit of spirituality and was easily manipulated. Even with Precision, its consumption of spirituality wasn't significant.

Lumian also felt a significant enhancement in his spirituality. His mind cleared, and his life force intensified. He could compress flames to a blazing white state in an incredibly short time, merging with flaming spears and swiftly covering dozens to hundreds of meters. Ignoring the spirituality consumption, he could travel using this method.

While Lumian's strength, speed, and physique had improved, he was still not resilient enough to withstand a bullet with his body.

...

At the entrance of the mostly collapsed male bathroom in the Matani Import and Export Shop, the silver-white full-body armor burst out, wielding a light-condensed hammer in both hands.

It searched left and right but couldn't locate its target. Gradually, it seemed to "calm down."

From a nearby shadow, Franca emerged, her eyes assessing Kolobo within the half-collapsed bathroom. His life wasn't at risk, but his injuries were significant, and he appeared weakened.

He'll be Pride Armor's next target... Franca thought quickly. Seizing the moment while Pride Armor was still on the lookout for the backstabber and hadn't chosen a new target, she swiftly approached. Franca grabbed the motionless silver full-body armor and deftly stowed it into her Traveler's Bag.

"Meet up with Jenna!" Franca called out to Anthony, positioned outside the corridor.

In an instant, she melted into the shadows, disappearing from sight.

…

Surveying his newfound abilities, Lumian felt a surge of delight. Is this Reaper… If I were to confront Hisoka now, breaking through his defenses wouldn't be a concern. My craving for combat and slaughter has intensified… Having adapted to the changes in his body, Lumian turned to Hela and expressed his gratitude.

"Thank you."

Hela, not seeing any cause for gratitude, sighed and commented, "Your team's teamwork is impressive."

"Madame Hela, the ritual has succeeded, but I wish to enter Hisoka's dream again and inquire about something else," Lumian requested.

Hela nodded in agreement.

"The ritual requires him to remain lucid. He might lie, but the questioning doesn't need him to be lucid."

As she finished speaking, Lumian suddenly closed his eyes, slumping to the ground against a dilapidated stone pillar.

The corners of his mouth remained curled up, and his expression gradually turned calm.

In the dream's interrogation room, Lumian took a seat across from Hisoka and addressed the captive, whose malice and desire to kill were no longer concealed.

"Thank you for your help. I've become a Reaper."

Hisoka, leaning forward, seemed to forget that he could attack.

"So what if you're a Reaper? In a duel, I'd still kill you easily!

"If you hadn't joined forces with Hidden Blade and relied on numbers, you would have been dead!"

No longer lucid, he's finally revealing his true thoughts in the dream… Lumian chuckled and responded, "If I can create an opportunity to fight with numbers, why should I face you one-on-one?

"My companions are also a part of my strength."

Hisoka spoke with malice, "Do you truly trust that Hypnotist?

"It's very dangerous to open up your body and mind to a Hypnotist. Aren't you afraid that he'll take the opportunity to leave some hidden cues that will unknowingly bring you under his control?"

Lumian gazed at Hisoka for a moment before breaking into a smile.

"Perhaps that's why I defeated you. No wonder Mad Lady said you weren't pure enough.

"Firstly, I do trust him. We've been through life and death together.

"Secondly, I'm willing to take such a risk to kill all of you!"

Straightening up, Lumian locked eyes with Hisoka, enunciating each word, "Even if I plunge into the Abyss, even if I descend into hell, I shall witness your tragic demise!"

Hisoka fell silent.

Lumian eased back into his seat, composed himself, and casually inquired, "I learned from Devilology that a Devil requires a ritual to advance to Desire Apostle. It's best if it's a special serial killing ritual. However, other than the one four years ago, there's only been one in Port Pylos recently. Furthermore, I've already killed the murderer. How did you advance?

"With a boon? You couldn't have become a Desire Apostle four years ago, could you?"

Hisoka responded with a smile, "Just because you don't know doesn't mean it didn't happen."

Lumian's heart stirred.

"Was one of those two pranks to cover up your advancement ritual?"

Lumian ventured, drawing from the scattered information he had gleaned from the peripheral members of April Fool's. They were like scattered pieces of a puzzle, each offering a fragment of the truth but lacking the full picture.

The tales spoke of chaos unleashed: a disappearance of gold in the depths of Devise, and a clash between townsfolk and a primitive tribe in Tizamo Town, resulting in tragedy.

Lumian suspected that Hisoka's advancement ritual had been shrouded within the chaos of Tizamo's prank.

Hisoka's eyes sparkled with approval, his tone paternal.

"You're quite perceptive."

Lumian seized the moment to shift the conversation.

"What's up with the Nois family's Demon?"

He treaded cautiously, sidestepping the Celestial Worthy and the Mother Tree of Desire, for now.

Hisoka's expression turned cold.

"I aimed to utilize him to acquire something and carry out a ritual to appease him repeatedly, but he only formed a connection with me. He only granted me an opportunity two years ago."

Something… Two years ago… The pranks in the gold mine city and the town of Tizamo took place after this. One happened at the close of the preceding year, while the other unfolded at the close of last year… Lumian started suspecting that these two pranks might have motives beyond concealing the advancement ritual.

Before he could delve deeper, Hisoka asked vehemently and frenziedly, "Why didn't you seek the Tarot Club's assistance this time?"

Lumian arched his eyebrows and inquired with confusion, "Why does it matter to you? Even without the Tarot Club's aid, I could have successfully dealt with you."

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Chapter 651 An Unfulfilled Conspiracy

In the beige, four-story patrol team building, Camus had managed to break free from the poker card's influence. He discovered Sow sprawled in a pool of blood, brutally torn apart by two zombie-like undead creatures.

In neighboring rooms, another patrol team member, under Twanaku's control, put up a stubborn resistance. His comrades had already fallen victim to the relentless assault.

Camus, catching his breath, hadn't anticipated stumbling upon an assassination plot within the patrol team, putting his own life at risk.

His gaze fixed on Deputy Captain Reaza, a middle-aged man in a sleek black suit controlling the undead creatures. Confused, Camus inquired, "How did Sow end up joining the Rose School of Thought?

"And why are so many members under their control?"

Despite Camus resisting the poker card's influence, Jenna's earlier shout lingered in his mind.

Reaza, surveying the scene of blood and undead, responded after a moment of contemplation, "It's likely Twanaku's doing."

Twanaku... Camus recalled the questions raised by Louis Berry.

Was Twanaku truly responsible for the serial murders four years ago?

Could he be a Devil in disguise?

Frowning, Camus grumbled, "Keeping a Zombie on the team was already a significant risk. Just because he can show restraint doesn't clear him from suspicion of being a Rose School of Thought member. He might indulge at specific times."

Reaza, with a stern demeanor, spoke in a deep voice, "We'd confirmed he defected from the Rose School of Thought. He believes in The Fool."

"The Fool, the temperance faction?" Camus asked in surprise,

not expecting such a revelation.

...

In the dream's interrogation room, housed within the ancient and crumbling palace of the Nation of the Evernight, Hisoka couldn't contain his amusement at Lumian's question.

"If you had sought the Tarot Club's assistance, I could have killed you!"

Hisoka's laughter reverberated, and his black shadow danced on the wall, morphing into curved goat horns and colossal bat wings.

Lumian caught a whiff of a conspiracy and asked in confusion and curiosity, "Why do you think so?"

Hisoka rose, a murderous glint materializing in his eyes.

"If you involve the Tarot Club, they'll undoubtedly seek my aid in your investigation."

At this point, Hisoka's lips curled into an unusually flamboyant smile.

No longer conscious in the dream, he revealed his innermost self.

Lumian raised an eyebrow, asking, "Are you a Minor Arcana card holder?"

Hisoka shook his head, replying with a radiant smile, "I'm a member of the temperance faction, a devotee of Mr. Fool."

The Devil burst into laughter, bowing and exclaiming, "Praise The Fool!"

Lumian, finding it absurd and amusing, instinctively analyzed the situation.

Hisoka is actually a member of the Rose School of Thought's temperance faction? A flamboyant and malicious Devil is actually a member of the temperance faction?

Logically speaking, this was clearly impossible!

Yet, in this dream crafted by Hela, unless Hisoka possessed unique abilities to deceive, lying was unlikely.

The only plausible explanation: he had infiltrated the temperance faction through deception and deceit!

On the surface, Hisoka seemed to be a Beyonder of the Prisoner pathway, displaying a level of restraint. As a non-core member of the temperance faction, he might have gone unnoticed with his issues.

Right, is this why the Matani patrol team allowed a Prisoner pathway Beyonder to join?

This was more than four years ago. Back then, Hisoka was merely a Sequence 8 Lunatic of the Prisoner pathway, not yet a Mid-Sequence Beyonder. As a peripheral member of the temperance faction, he likely operated without much scrutiny.

Moreover, he probably joined the temperance faction before this, when he was weaker and less noticeable.

Later, he faked receiving resources from the temperance faction and the Rose School of Thought's attack to advance. In reality, did he rely on the Mother Tree of Desire's boons? Where did those resources go? Were they secretly sold or crafted into a mystical item? That poker card?

Why did he infiltrate the temperance faction and worship Mr. Fool?

His main goal clearly isn't resources...

Faith in Mr. Fool…

With this in mind, Lumian suddenly had a guess.

Hisoka's true aim was to infiltrate the Church of The Fool through a certain pathway and have faith in Mr. Fool!

This revelation came from Celestial Worthy!

Hisoka genuinely believes in the Celestial Worthy of Heaven and Earth for Blessings. However, that Celestial Worthy is resisting Mr. Fool. He can clearly influence the Seer, Apprentice, and Marauder pathways…

Hisoka used a specific technique during prayer. On the surface, he seemed to be praying to Mr. Fool, but in reality, did he receive a message from that Celestial Worthy? This way, he wouldn't face the risk of a false premise…

That's very likely… Madam Magician mentioned that if I don't follow the procedures when praying to Mr. Fool, the response might not be from him, but from the Celestial Worthy…

Why did Celestial Worthy make Hisoka do this?

Marauder… Steal… Could It be that He intends to gradually steal Mr. Fool's identity and faith through this method?

When many believers genuinely believe in Mr. Fool, but they equate him as the Celestial Worthy, the Celestial Worthy becomes The Fool?

Hiss, the more I think about it, the more terrifying it becomes…

Hisoka can't do it alone. There must be many others who share similar beliefs…

Impressive. If the Celestial Worthy usually gathers followers, the Tarot Club would wipe them out at the slightest hint. Yet, if their followers outwardly professed faith in Mr. Fool, not only would they escape destruction, but they'd also gain protection…

How devious…

Lumian swiftly deduced the situation, sensing the ominous pressure from the hidden Celestial Worthy.

Once marked by Him, failure could creep in unnoticed and strike him down unexpectedly!

Considering this, Lumian recalled Port Pylos and grasped Hisoka's confidence. He also comprehended why Hisoka had opted to remain and wait patiently.

Freshly arrived in the Southern Continent and stepping into Port Pylos for the first time, Lumian lacked resources, companions, and even knowledge of Dutanese. There was a high likelihood that he'd seek aid from the Tarot Club standing behind him.

The Major Arcana card holders of the Tarot Club wouldn't personally intervene without a clear target due to the uncertain timeframe. They would likely dispatch a Minor Arcana card holder familiar with the Southern Continent or a faction member to assist.

Under these circumstances, who better to meet the requirements than Twanaku Tupián, a Church of The Fool's temperance faction member from Matani, well-versed in the local situation, holding the appropriate official status, and reaching Sequence 6.

In that scenario, Lumian and Hisoka would investigate Hisoka. The other party would gradually grasp the situation, assess potential traps and their effectiveness. Hisoka could then seize the opportunity for a surprise attack, assault the mind, and trigger desires!

Contemplating this, Lumian acknowledged that if he failed to detect Hisoka's malice during the investigation, the chances of succumbing to Hisoka's hands were 100%. He'd be a spectator as the Devil faced off against Termiboros in the form of a soul fragment.

Hisoka, informed by Loki, should have made preparations to deal with the dangerous creature within the seal. Perhaps relying on the Nois family's Demon or his status as a Blessed of the Mother Tree of Desire.

Thankfully, Madam Magician kept reminding me that a Hunter can't rely on high-ranking individuals behind an organization for everything. I need to hone my skills, familiarize myself with conspiracies and battles. Otherwise, I might have sought guidance from the Tarot Club as soon as I arrived in Port Pyro…

That would have been dangerous…

Grande Soeur and Emperor Roselle both mentioned that the most dangerous places are often the safest. Now, I must add that those who seem the safest and most reliable might pose the greatest risk…

It's not that they're no longer trustworthy, but the enemy will exploit this sense of security.

Yes, Madam Magician has also emphasized that if anything seems awry with her orders and suggestions, I should ignore them. Quickly contacting the other Major Arcana card holders to confirm the situation is crucial.

Lumian gazed at the flamboyant Hisoka and smiled.

"If I hadn't received help from a special trace expert, if Hidden Blade hadn't been more familiar with your persona, and if I hadn't had a Psychiatrist to profile you, and ultimately failed to find any clues or direction, I would have sought the Tarot Club's help and looked for a guide familiar with the local situation."

Hisoka fell into silence. After a few moments, he spoke up, "I get everything else, but why the sudden need for a special trace expert?"

Lumian chuckled.

"Because it's a gift from a true god."

The more time Lumian spent with Ludwig, the more he felt that letting such a dangerous individual escape the Church's control wasn't a decision a high-ranking member of the Church of Knowledge would make. There had to be a revelation from the God of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Certainly, Lumian couldn't be sure. As far as he knew, the Knowledge pathway, also known as the Reader pathway, excelled in prophecies at high Sequence.

Hisoka fell into silence for a moment before unleashing a roar, much like a wild wolf howling beneath the moon.

Lumian reviewed the entire incident, realizing that this revenge was a clash of conspiracies. Unfortunately, Hisoka didn't grasp his personality and style well enough, nor did he comprehend his companions. He could only rely on the sea prayer ritual and Loki's first death as a guide. Consequently, there was a deviation, shattering his expectations despite a high likelihood of success.

Phew… Lumian exhaled and inquired, "Who were the ones causing havoc on the patrol team's side?"

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Chapter 652 "Extreme Joy Begets Sorrow"

Upon hearing Lumian's question, Hisoka's lips curved into a smile.

"Those are a few Fallen, under my control."

"Fallen?" Lumian could understand the literal meaning, but he didn't grasp the situation.

Simultaneously, he criticized Hisoka.

This is truly a dream. Emotions change so quickly.

Hisoka reminisced, "A Desire Apostle can plant a seed in others' hearts when their emotions and desires clearly fluctuate, causing corresponding problems to worsen. Gradually, they lose control and degenerate.

"When combined with my special abilities, I can make those humans unable to escape my control and obey only me for a long period through repeated depravities."

It's akin to injecting addictive psychiatric drugs, but more mystical? Lumian searched for analogous examples from an easy-to-understand perspective.

Suddenly, he recalled Naboredisley's description of Demons: "Demon in body, Demon in mind..."

Could this be a manifestation of the Demon within the mind? Is Hisoka's distinctiveness reflected in this aspect? Could it be that the individual from the temperance faction liaising with him has been tainted by his influence, causing them to withhold reporting any irregularities? Lumian gazed thoughtfully at Hisoka and inquired, "Indeed, as one would expect from an Apostle of Desire, a Demon that seduces the darkness of the mind. Is this a ritual for ascending to a Demon?"

"Just acclimating for now," Hisoka didn't refute, yet he sensed the current situation was far from ideal. It felt more like a rehearsal.

"You seem quite assured. Following the incident in Tizamo Town at year's end, you likely ascended to a Desire Apostle. It's only been a year, and you're already contemplating becoming a demigod?" Lumian mused briefly before questioning, "Is it because you finally appeased that Demon from the Nois family and acquired that thing?"

Even in his reverie, Hisoka appeared hesitant to disclose this matter. He responded with a hint of reluctance, "Yes."

Lumian refrained from provoking Hisoka for the time being, ensuring the dream didn't end prematurely. He altered his question.

"Where is that thing?"

When Hisoka transformed into a Devil, his attire ruptured, and nothing unusual dropped.

Hisoka's countenance contorted as he responded, "I-in Tizamo Town."

Concealed in his body's hometown, Tizamo Town... If it's significant, why doesn't he carry it with him? Lumian's curiosity about the two pranks orchestrated by Hisoka in Tizamo Town and the gold mine city, Devise, intensified.

After a brief pause of contemplation, Lumian inquired, "You staged a prank in Devise just to pilfer a batch of gold?"

"Yes," Hisoka affirmed.

Have you consumed too many novels like the Gold Heist? Were you in dire need of such a large sum of money back then? Yes, for criminals, it's quite normal to plan an operation to snatch gold when necessary. Unlike me, who relies on hunting and the gifts of villains... Just as Lumian thought it was trivial, he suddenly considered something.

Franca has been accumulating gold for future sacrifices to the Armored Shadow, Chen Tu...

Could Hisoka have orchestrated a prank to obtain a substantial amount of gold for a similar sacrifice? Lumian scrutinized Hisoka and probed, "Did you offer the gold as a sacrifice to the Nois family's Demon?"

Hisoka replied nonchalantly, "In Tizamo Town."

"What's in Tizamo Town?" Lumian asked.

Hisoka appeared to snap out of his daze and exclaimed with a contorted expression, "Dream Festival, Dream Festival!"

His shadow surged to life, leaping onto him and shrouding him.

Hisoka reverted to pitch-black, transforming into a viscous, repulsive, and malevolent liquid that spread swiftly in all directions, as if determined to corrupt the interrogation room, Lumian, and the entire dream.

Lumian promptly exited the dream and observed Hisoka, who lay asleep on the ground, displaying signs of Devilification once more. Furthermore, he seemed

somewhat translucent.

This key member of April Fool's was teetering on the brink of losing control!

Without hesitation, Lumian materialized a longsword crafted from blazing white flames in his hand.

The Hisoka figure before him emitted a myriad of colors, with the pale-white mark on the bridge of his nose being the least conspicuous.

Weakness Investigation!

Paleness signified a vulnerability.

Lumian hoisted the flaming sword, gripping it with both hands, and thrust downward, vanishing into the pale-white hue.

The Devil-like armor, resilient flesh, and steel-like bones bestowed by Zombie endured only a second before being pierced.

Lumian withdrew his blazing-white flaming sword and thrust down again.

Pfft!

This time, it penetrated deeper.

Lumian extracted the blazing-white flaming sword once more and leaped up, adding his weight to the downward thrust.

Pfft!

Lumian genuflected, and the flaming sword plunged into Hisoka's brain, transforming into scattered flames that obliterated all weakness.

Lumian withdrew his hands and stood up.

Hisoka's body, displaying signs of Devilification, twitched a few times before settling.

Adjacent to the bridge of his nose, a two-finger-wide wound appeared grotesquely abnormal. Its surface was charred and contracted, while flames surged from within.

The Devil had lost his life.

How resilient. He managed to withstand three strikes like this… Lumian gazed at Hisoka's corpse and silently sighed.

In that moment, Hisoka's corpse swiftly turned transparent, and his light brown skin gradually faded to pale-white.

Wraith… Transforming into a genuine wraith after death? Just as these thoughts crossed Lumian's mind, his surroundings abruptly darkened.

In the depths of the darkness, a serene chant resonated, soothing one's body and mind, inducing a reluctance to do anything but lie still.

All escape was tranquility.

Hisoka's wraith form halted its transformation, gradually gaining a tangible quality.

Finally, he perished completely.

What a formidable adversary to vanquish… If his wraith transformation hadn't been halted, could he have endured as a true wraith, evolving into an evil spirit in the future? Lumian glanced at Hela beside him and spoke once more, "Thank you."

He refrained from elaborating his conversation with Hisoka, recognizing that they had spoken in the dream created by Hela. She must be aware of it.

"Loki is the only one left," Hela said coldly, her gaze fixed on Hisoka's lifeless form.

Lumian fell silent for a few seconds before stating, "He can't be resurrected more than a few times."

"At most one more time," Hela replied with certainty.

Another time… Lumian tersely acknowledged.

Before long, Hisoka's Beyonder characteristic manifested, blending with the remaining goat horns above his head, transforming into a whimsical and flamboyant cluster of black crystals.

Various crystals extended in all directions, sharp and crooked. Multiple illusory, translucent faces emerged from each black crystal, their expressions alternating between malevolence, pain, madness, and confusion.

A Desire Apostle Beyonder characteristic corrupted by a Wraith boon? Lumian perceived it as more corrupting and perilous than the Serial Killer Beyonder characteristic from before.

He pointed at the Beyonder characteristic and Hisoka's lifeless body, addressing Hela, "Can I take them all?"

"Okay," Hela responded without objections.

…

In an old warehouse on an abandoned dock in Port Pylos, Franca, Anthony, and Jenna had already gathered, awaiting Lumian's return.

Amidst their conversation, a figure outlined itself in the sunlight streaming through a high window. It was Lumian, wearing a golden straw hat and disguised as Louis Berry.

Pa!

Lumian tossed Hisoka's corpse to the ground.

Immediately after, he retrieved the Beyonder characteristic from his Traveler's Bag and placed them near the corpse without touching them.

Only then did he smile at Franca, Jenna, and Anthony.

"It's settled."

"Is it really Hisoka?" Franca couldn't believe it could be so straightforward.

"It's him," Lumian briefly explained the situation. "He was overconfident and believed there's a high chance of killing me. He chose to stay and wait for an opportunity."

"What gave him the confidence?" Franca's eyes widened.

Since everyone present held a Minor Arcana card, Lumian didn't hold anything back. He recounted the situation, omitting the most perilous details.

"Can that really happen… Luckily, you didn't seek guidance from the Tarot Club." Jenna felt a lingering fear.

Franca sighed and commented, "I didn't think our collaboration alone would be sufficient."

Lumian pointed at the Beyonder characteristic and stated, "There's too much corruption, and it's very dangerous. I plan to seek Madam Magician's help and find a suitable Artisan to transform it into a Sealed Artifact. Everyone has the right to use it."

Lumian found it too sinister and corrupting. It couldn't become a mystical item with relatively mild negative effects. It could only be the kind that required sealing.

"Absolutely." Franca was filled with anticipation as she imagined the potential abilities of a Sealed Artifact.

She suddenly recalled something and quickly blurted out, "Your Pride Armor is still in my possession. Tsk, you've really gotten the most out of it."

Lumian chuckled.

"How can I face Devils without a Warrior? I've always wanted to use the Pride Armor, but I didn't expect Hisoka to choose the most convenient place like the bathroom."

It was a confined, tight space with a certain degree of flexibility.

Franca retrieved the Pride Armor from her Traveler's Bag and placed it on the ground.

Suddenly, the air in the old warehouse froze.

The silver-white full-body armor turned to face Lumian, condensing into a broadsword of light. Then, it knelt on one knee and thrust into the ground.

Wh— Lumian's pupils dilated as his figure abruptly faded, disappearing from his spot.

The broadsword of light split open, transforming into a devastating storm that engulfed the surroundings, obliterating numerous wooden crates.

Wh— Franca, Jenna, and Anthony couldn't dodge in time and were shattered into fragments by the Hurricane of Light, reflecting brilliance.

"Dammit! Isn't this too vengeful? How much time has passed?!" Franca cursed from a corner of the warehouse.

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Chapter 653 Lumian’s Choice

Chapter 653 Lumian's Choice

?Franca emerged from the shadows, exhaling a sigh of relief as she saw the silver-white full-body armor return to silence following Lumian's departure from the warehouse and the absence of weak targets.

With caution, she approached, making sure not to position herself behind the Pride Armor, finally standing face to face with it.

The Pride Armor remained motionless.

Franca extended her hands, barely lifting the silver-white full-body armor and tucking it back into her Traveler's Bag. Only then did she relax and call out, "It's all right, it's all right."

Jenna emerged from a dark corner on the other side, and Anthony suddenly appeared at the warehouse door, seemingly prepared to roll and escape at any moment.

In a matter of seconds, Lumian somersaulted back from a high window, eliciting a chuckle from Franca.

"Damn it, we managed Hisoka just fine, but our own Sealed Artifact nearly wiped us out. Good thing we had substitutes. Otherwise, we might have been severely injured, if not dead," she remarked.

Jenna commented calmly, "This could be a funny story for Ghost Face."

Having moved out of the market district, she now had plenty of free time. Though she still owed Franca a large sum of money, she had enough assets to cover it. Thus, while completing the Tarot Club mission and trying to act, she could afford to watch a play once a week, buy magazines, newspapers, and books she had longed for but couldn't justify purchasing, and indulge in department stores and certain restaurants she had once yearned for.

Franca let out a hollow laugh.

"Who would have thought this armor would hold such a grudge? Hey Lumian, what did you do to it?"

she inquired, directing the subsequent questions to Lumian.

Lumian spread his hands.

"Wasn't it just a backstab?

"I thought it would be fine after disengaging and waiting for it to calm down."

Franca nodded repeatedly, offering him a way out.

"That's right, I thought so too.

"It's all because of that armor! It doesn't feel like armor at all!"

After a moment of pondering, Franca said, "I wonder when it will forget that you stabbed it in the back. For now, you'll have to leave it with me."

"Alright," Lumian said, feeling a twinge of regret. Such a useful Sealed Artifact was temporarily unusable.

He glanced at Hisoka's severely damaged corpse and the seemingly unscathed Beyonder characteristic, stowing them away in his Traveler's Bag. He said seriously, "I hope that the operation against the Minister of Industry will commence after the Sealed Artifact is completed. Though its negative effects will undoubtedly be severe, Desire Apostle and Wraith are definitely very useful, even if they can only unleash a portion of their abilities."

"Indeed," Franca replied, filled with anticipation.

She then turned to Lumian and asked, "Hisoka is already dead. You've achieved your goal in the Southern Continent. Where are you going next? Are you returning to Trier with us?"

Lumian shook his head, as if he had already considered the answer to this question.

"I plan to stay in the Southern Continent for a while longer."

"Why? To investigate Tizamo Town and the Hisoka matter? That doesn't seem necessary," Jenna expressed her confusion.

Lumian chuckled.

"This is a Hunter's paradise, don't you think?"

Without waiting for Franca and the others to inquire further, Lumian explained seriously, "After all that has transpired, I've come to realize something. For a Hunter to act well and digest swiftly, they must undergo diverse experiences.

"What I mean is, a Hunter's path is more straightforward compared to other paths. It's unlike Demonesses who must navigate pleasure, pain, while contemplating abstract and philosophical concepts which are often more intricate.

"As long as a Hunter is immersed in chaos, conflict, and constant combat, they can excel. Combat is akin to hunting. Chaos and conflict invariably breed numerous conspiracies. Provocation smoothens these conspiracies, arson secures victory in battle, and the aftermath of such incidents reaps the lives of enemies and the spoils of victory."

Observing Franca, Jenna, and Anthony's puzzled expressions, Lumian smiled and continued, "It's been just over half a year since I ascended from Sequence 9 to Sequence 5. Why?

"Because I've been either passively or actively embroiled in a series of events. Through perpetual chaos, disputes, and battles, I've grasped the principles of performance and found opportunities to act."

"In essence, a Hunter doesn't engage in elaborate acting before reaching High-Sequence Beyonder status. Though I possess some insight into fate due to my characteristics, it's also linked to determination and willpower. It's an integral part of combat.

"Hunters are forged in the crucible of blood and fire. They thrive amidst chaos and conflict. If I aim to grow stronger, I must pursue these elements. The Southern Continent offers precisely that."

Thus, Lumian could swiftly assimilate the Reaper potion and strive to become a Sequence 5 Fate Appropriator of the Inevitability pathway.

Only by truly mastering some of fate's abilities could Lumian hope to uncover any connection between Loki and the ancient castle when he next confronted him.

According to Franca, Lumian had to locate the respawn point of an enemy capable of resurrection and camp there!

Certainly, the path to becoming a Fate Appropriator came with its own set of risks. Lumian's chances of encountering Circle Inhabitant Voisin Sanson would significantly rise, whether due to the convergence of an Outer Deity's Blessed resulting from the world's rejection or the convergence of Inevitability powers.

Despite his yearning for such an encounter, Lumian was aware that he wasn't prepared to face a demigod, lacking the corresponding strength. A high-level Beyonder he could hire wouldn't be able to constantly keep an eye on him, and the moment of encounter was beyond his control.

Franca couldn't hide her envy upon hearing Lumian's plan.

If only the Demoness pathway's acting were that straightforward.

The early stages with Assassins and Instigators were relatively direct, but as time went on, it became more complicated.

Sigh. When I first met Lumian, I was clearly at a higher Sequence and stronger than him. It's only been half a year, but the tables have turned… Franca felt a mix of sorrow and impulsive emotions.

After sending Franca, Jenna, and Anthony back to Trier, Lumian entered Suite 7 on B3 of Hotel Orella, signaling for Lugano to leave.

Then, he carefully extracted Hisoka's lifeless body from his Traveler's Bag and positioned it in front of Ludwig. With a grin, he remarked, "Here's my end of the bargain. Is it edible?"

Ludwig, clutching a silver child's knife and fork with a steak laid out before him, sprung up from his seat. As he examined the torn, half-Devil-like, and bloodied remains, a mix of desire and hesitation played across his face.

It was clear he was tempted but wary.

After more than ten seconds, Ludwig delicately picked up the child's utensils and resolved himself.

"A tiny bit."

Without awaiting Lumian's reply, he crouched down and extended the child's knife and fork toward Hisoka's still open, flaxen-colored eyes.

Amidst the slicing sounds, Ludwig retrieved the Devil-like eyeballs, one on the fork and the other on the knife's tip.

Then, he poured a glass of orange Gwadar with one hand.

"There's caffeine in this. Not suitable for children," Lumian pointed out.

Ludwig glanced at the enticing beverage, then at the eyeballs on the child's utensils, and the half-Devil corpse on the ground. He fell silent.

Lumian also fell silent.

After a few moments, Ludwig submerged the eyeballs into the orange-yellow Gwadar, deliberately puncturing more holes with his fork to allow the liquid to seep out.

Then, he lifted the drink and squatted beside Hisoka's corpse, bringing the glass to a spot where some blood still dripped.

Bloop! Bloop! Bloop! Three drops of sulfur-scented blood fell into the fading orange beverage, swiftly tinting it with the color of blood.

Ludwig swirled the liquid in the glass and consumed it.

Lumian observed as Ludwig finished his drink, noting a clear boost in energy. Curious, he inquired, "What's the effect of this?"

Ludwig licked his lips and responded, "Permanently enhances my spirituality, allowing me to keenly sense the aura of the Abyss. I can also command a few lower-level undead creatures.

"Only the first glass has this effect. Subsequent drinks of a similar nature can only temporarily heighten my perception and restore some spirituality."

Ludwig's tone carried a maturity as he spoke on such matters.

Not bad… but only you would dare to consume such a messy thing… Lumian criticized inwardly. He stowed away Hisoka's remains and retreated to his bedroom, initiating a letter to Madam Magician. The focus was on reporting Hisoka's apparent identity, his speculations, and the issues with Tizamo Town. Additionally, he proposed that the reward for these unexpected discoveries should be the transformation of Hisoka's Beyonder characteristic into a Sealed Artifact.

Having neatly folded the letter, Lumian produced a jagged black crystal clump and arranged a ritual. He called forth Madam Magician's doll messenger.

Upon its emergence, the doll messenger emitted a disdainful sound, pinching its nose.

It pointed at Hisoka's Beyonder characteristic and remarked in a sharp voice,

"Pack it into a box! It's filthy!"

Lumian retrieved a small paper box from his Traveler's Bag and stuffed the black crystal clump inside.

"Tie it up."

"Stuff it in another box."

"Use another box to contain them."

The doll messenger continued with its requests.

Finally, it begrudgingly picked up the box and carried the letter away.

…

Port Pylos's patrol team.

Reaza informed Camus, "All the problematic team members have been purged. The rest are undergoing individual reviews. You are part of it too."

"How's Kolobo?" Camus asked with concern.

"He's fine. We went to the Earth Mother Church to hire a Doctor," Reaza replied calmly. "The major issue now is that we haven't apprehended Twanaku. Moreover, we're certain that he's both a Wraith and a Desire Apostle."

"How? Isn't he too powerful?" Camus felt a twinge of fear at the thought of potential retaliation from Twanaku.

At that moment, a patrol team member entered the office and informed Reaza and Camus, "Captain Reaza, Boss, the straw hat guy is back!"

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Chapter 654 Bounty

Louis Berry is back again? Camus's forehead twitched at the mention of the "straw hat guy."

Since encountering the adventurer, his life had taken a tumultuous turn. First, he had "captured" the murderer in a serial killing case, then he unearthed clues related to a four-year-old case. Subsequently, the suspect had emerged, attempting to harm him and Kolobo, throwing the patrol team into chaos.

And now, Louis Berry was making another appearance?

Camus felt the weight on his chest, and his heart raced.

"Where is Louis Berry?" Reaza was already familiar with Camus's account.

The patrol team member who had brought the report hastily answered, "Sitting in the hall."

Reaza nodded, and he and Camus left the office, descending the stairs.

As they walked, Camus gradually snapped out of his daze.

He recalled Louis Berry's suspicions about Twanaku the previous day, how he had abandoned his theories without delving into specifics, and how the adventurer had sought him out early in the morning, hoping to gather information indirectly. Shortly after Kolobo handed over Twanaku's information, the latter had been attacked, leading to a fierce battle.

Did Louis Berry employ such a cautious inquiry to avoid triggering the Devil's Danger Premonition? Was buying information from Kolobo a trap targeting Twanaku? No, hadn't Twanaku sensed the corresponding danger? He could only sense it a minute or two in advance, and would it be too late by the time he discovered it? As a former Public Security Officer and now an Interrogator, Camus swiftly made connections and speculations.

He believed that Louis Berry had likely identified Twanaku after learning about his preference for sugarless Fermo coffee. He hinted at suspicions regarding the police headquarters but refrained from going into specifics, fearing that Twanaku might foresee danger!

As for how Louis Berry set a trap for Twanaku without detection, Camus couldn't puzzle it out for now.

Furthermore, he suspected that Louis Berry's operation hadn't been entirely successful. There were no signs from the Matani Import and Export Shop indicating Twanaku's demise.

This was a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle, wielding the power of a Sequence 5 Wraith. Unless a demigod personally intervened, they might require two or three battle teams of Mid-Sequence Beyonders from pathways like Sun and Warrior to handle him. Alternatively, they needed to mobilize Beyonders at the level of a Sequence 5 Pirate Admiral, armed with potent mystical items.

Soon, Camus and Reaza spotted Louis Berry seated on the sofa in the hall's guest area, his golden straw hat standing out in the sunlight.

"Monsieur Louis Berry, what brings you here again?" Camus inquired in deep Intisian.

Louis Berry gave Camus a deep look before smiling and addressing Reaza in fluent Dutanese, "I'm here to collect the bounty."

As he spoke, he retrieved Twanaku's head from his Traveler's Bag.

Camus and Reaza observed the blood-stained face, the head with the broken horn, the vacant eyes, and the gruesome wound on the bridge of the nose, along with ten to twenty deep cuts.

Despite the severe damage, Camus, a former Public Security Officer, recognized the owner at a glance.

Twanaku Tupián!

He succeeded? Had he truly set a trap for a Desire Apostle and managed to defeat him? Camus's gaze shifted up, scrutinizing Louis Berry, a young man with the title of a great adventurer in the Fog Sea.

Such strength could rival any Pirate Admiral in the Five Seas!

Of course, this assessment applied only to individual abilities, excluding the subordinates of Pirate Admirals.

Reaza silently ascertained from a spiritual level. He turned to Camus and asked in Dutanese,

"Is it Twanaku?"

"Yes," Camus confirmed, sighing inwardly.

The battle between Twanaku and Louis Berry had been fierce, resulting in his tragic demise. Not only were his eyes absent, but he was also covered in wounds, displaying signs of Devilification.

Reaza looked at Lumian and pondered for a moment before speaking in Dutanese, "I wonder if you've seen Twanaku's wanted poster. The bounty is only 70,000 verl d'or."

Back then, the bounty was set based on the criteria of a Serial Killer. It was only increased by 20,000 because this particular Serial Killer targeted Beyonders.

Lumian barely understood and switched to Intisian with a smile.

"If I wait two days to collect the bounty, will I be able to get more?"

Upon hearing this, Camus pondered for a moment and realized the validity of the statement.

In two days, their wanted posters would depict Desire Apostle and Wraith Twanaku, who had caused the deaths of several members of the patrol team, not the Serial Killer from the past!

Of course, with Matani's financial resources, it was impossible to significantly raise the bounty. At most, they could double it and report the danger to the Church of Earth Mother, the Eternal Blazing Sun Church, and other official organizations in the Northern Continent to see if they would be willing to increase the bounty.

After Camus translated Lumian's words into Dutanese, Reaza remained silent, unsure of how to respond.

For the patrol team, 70,000 to 80,000 verl d'or was a substantial sum!

Without waiting for a response, Lumian added with a smile, "But there's no need to add to the bounty. Just fulfill two of my requests. Two simple ones."

"What are they?" Reaza asked in a deep voice after hearing Camus's translation.

Lumian chuckled in response, stating, "Firstly, I want to see all the dossiers related to Tizamo Town. Secondly, I'm very curious about Twanaku's card and want to take a look. Of course, I'll just take a look."

"You want to investigate last year's incident in Tizamo Town? Isn't your sole purpose in Port Pylos to find Twanaku?" Camus asked, puzzled.

Lumian chuckled.

"Need I remind you? Twanaku's hometown is Tizamo Town."

Wh— Camus suddenly felt that the matter with Twanaku wouldn't conclude with the other party's death. There were still many secrets hidden behind it.

Louis Berry had mentioned this from the beginning.

After translating their conversation for Reaza, Camus sensed that the patrol team's previous investigation of the Tizamo Town incident might have concluded too hastily.

Eyeing Louis Berry, who had successfully taken down a Desire Apostle wielding Wraith powers, the chilly Reaza fell silent for a few seconds before uttering, "Who tasked you with looking into Twanaku?"

Without giving a direct response, Lumian inquired, "Did he declare himself a member of the temperance faction, a follower of The Fool?"

"It's not a self-proclamation. We verified it," Reaza confidently replied after hearing Camus's translation.

As anticipated… Just making confirmation, Lumian stood up for the Church of The Fool, stating, "Traitors can surface in any organization, and there'll be individuals with hidden agendas attempting to infiltrate."

"That's indeed our problem," Camus sincerely concluded. "We shouldn't solely rely on the organization they're affiliated with to determine a person's character or whether they can be recruited. We also need to observe their words and actions."

After careful consideration, Reaza agreed to Lumian's request.

While assigning another patrol team member to aid Lumian in the process and collect the bounty, he instructed Camus to show Lumian the poker card.

…

In the cold and silent underground corridor, Camus gazed at Lumian and cautiously asked, "What are you investigating?"

This had already led to the death of a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle!

Lumian emitted a soft chuckle.

"It's dangerous to know too much."

Camus fell silent, wisely choosing not to inquire further, drawing from past experiences.

As Lumian advanced, he casually asked, "How many members of the patrol team perished this time?"

"Four. All under Twanaku's control." Camus gave a self-

deprecating smile. "We'll be recruiting new members before the end of the year. They're fortunate. Those with suitable pathways don't have to worry about subsequent Sequence potions. If they aren't from the correct pathways, they can use Sealed Artifacts."

This was how the resources of an official organization gradually accumulated.

Lumian nodded slightly.

"How's Kolobo?"

Camus's smile grew more relaxed.

"He's fine. He's almost healed."

As they conversed, they arrived at a room adorned with cold bones. A metallic poker card lay on the table in the middle.

"Be careful. It will burrow into your body and control you like a Wraith," Camus warned.

Lumian nodded slightly and approached, reaching out for the card with the ten of spades on its face.

A bone-like sensation entered his mind, accompanied by a chilling cold.

Lumian's right hand quickly became encased in a layer of frost.

The frost rapidly crystallized and extended towards his arm.

Simultaneously, the card's surface underwent a transformation, revealing a grayish-white joker.

It rapidly etherealized, poised to merge with Lumian's body.

Silently, Lumian's arm burst into brilliant white flames. With a swift flick of his palm, he accurately pressed his thumb onto the poker card that hadn't completely dissipated, right onto the joker's face.

The poker card fell into silence.

Frost detached from Lumian's arm, descended to the ground, and melted into water.

Zombie's Frost, Wraith's Possession… This is really a mystical item from the Prisoner pathway… Lumian swiftly made a basic assessment.

However, the transformation abilities displayed by the poker cards didn't align with his understanding of the Prisoner pathway. Instead, they resembled superficial applications of a Faceless.

Could it be corruption brought about by the Celestial Worthy? Also, when the temperance faction provides resources, it's impossible to directly give Wraith. They start from low Sequences and work their way up… Did this poker card strengthen time and time again? Does Hisoka have a permanent Artisan

collaborator? Lumian withdrew his gaze from the poker card and slowly retreated to Camus's side.

"I'm done," he thought for a moment and said, "Be careful when using this item."

Camus nodded.

"We'll treat it as a Sealed Artifact rather than a mystical item."

Upon returning to the surface, Camus gathered all the dossiers related to Tizamo Town.

Lumian sorted through the items and picked up one of them.

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Chapter 655 Pleasure

Lumian carefully examined the dossier on the Tizamo Town tragedy, which unfolded at the close of the previous year.

It detailed the incident as a gentleman and his servant's hunting expedition in Tizamo Town's primitive forest. Their actions provoked a large primitive tribe, leading to a retaliatory surprise attack on Tizamo Town. The assault resulted in numerous casualties, including the gentleman, his servant, several patrol team members responsible for Tizamo Town's security, and many innocent civilians.

In response, Admiral Querarill deployed additional troops to safeguard the area, prompting the primitive tribe to retreat into the depths of the forest.

There are quite a few formidable tribes inhabiting the Southern Continent's primitive forests... Lumian sighed from the bottom of his heart after reading the dossier.

This situation, a historical relic from the Balam Empire era, was emblematic of the challenges faced by the region.

While ancient empires boasted numerous powerful individuals in their ranks, along with a substantial number of Low- to Mid-Sequence Beyonders, effective management faced limitations. Technical constraints, population size, and the diversity of characteristics restricted governance to cities with favorable geographical conditions. These included towns and villages surrounding these cities, fertile plains, pastures, and valleys. The more challenging terrains, like primitive forests and mountains, remained largely unexplored due to these limitations, providing little incentive for the empires to eliminate potential threats.

When the Northern Continent invaded, causing the fragmentation of the Balam Empire and the destruction or replacement of other nations, many rebels sought refuge in these untouched areas, intensifying the dangers of the primitive forests and mountains.

In contrast, after Emperor Roselle initiated the Industrial Revolution, such challenges decreased in the Northern Continent. Currently, only a few remnants linger in the mountains of the south-central region.

The dossier offers no clues about April Fool's pranks or any Demon presence. Lumian, undeterred, set aside the dossier and turned his attention to something else.

He searched for keywords like "dream" and "festival."

Before his demise, Hisoka had mentioned the "Dream Festival."

Unfortunately, the patrol team had only been operational for six to seven years, with no recorded history of Tizamo Town's previous issues. During this period, there were no instances of dream-related or festival-related problems in Tizamo Town.

Lumian wasn't disheartened. He placed the dossiers down and addressed Camus, "Can I make a copy of everything?"

"No problem." Camus knew Louis Berry was about to summon the Rabbit of Knowledge again.

At that moment, Reaza entered with another member of the patrol team, placing a small but weighty cloth bag in front of Lumian.

"Your bounty. Confirm it," Reaza said in Dutanese.

Lumian lifted the cloth bag and spilled its contents onto the table.

Banknotes from Intis and a considerable number of gold coins lay before him. Lumian counted them, confirming everything was in order.

After Reaza and the other patrol team member departed, Lumian turned to Camus and pushed the cloth bag over with a smile.

"You..." Camus's eyes widened, asking hesitantly.

Lumian responded with a grin, "As I said, I'll waive the official bounty."

"But I didn't..." Camus subconsciously replied, maintaining his politeness.

Lumian chuckled.

"The information you provided was crucial, but you need to share it with Kolobo.

"Also, do me a favor."

This sum of money is for information and compensation based on the dangers we faced... Camus pressed down on the cloth bag, asking, "What is it?"

"Help me find a few people born and raised in Tizamo Town who are currently living in Port Pylos. Also, locate a few who have visited Tizamo Town multiple times but have no connection to it. Bring them to my place one by one," Lumian requested.

Camus listened attentively and breathed a sigh of relief.

"No problem."

This matter was straightforward!

Upon his return to Hotel Orella, Lumian had barely set down the Rabbit of Knowledge's copied dossier in his room, ready to delve into its details, when the doorbell chimed.

Amidst the tinkling sounds, Lugano rushed to open the door.

Shortly after, he called out, "Boss, Monsieur Iveljsta wishes to meet you."

Iveljsta? The one residing on B18 with numerous Zombie servants, suspected to be a Wraith? He's here for me? Lumian raised his eyebrows, set aside the dossier, and exited the master bedroom.

...

Trier, Quartier de la Cath??drale Comm??morative.

In Franca and Jenna's rented apartment.

After seeing Anthony off, Franca returned to the master bedroom, contemplating the progress of digesting the Pleasure potion.

Even though Lumian's situation was unique, how could he digest the potion so quickly? How could he ascend to Sequence 5 in merely half a year? Despite this, Franca found herself triggered.

There lingered a sense of disappointment and frustration at being outpaced within seven months of watching over Lumian as an elder sister, or rather, an elder brother.

She longed to reach Sequence 5 and become a Demoness of Affliction at the earliest opportunity.

Truth be told, her digestion of the Pleasure potion surpassed that of most Demonesses. She had also gleaned substantial insights while delving into alternative interpretations and symbols of Pleasure. Patience was paramount, but blame fell upon the fellow with an absurdly rapid progression by her side!

Sigh, I must seek a partner for Pleasure. Both the ordinary and more profound forms of Pleasure are imperative. Only then can I digest it more rapidly. One is akin to my left foot, the other to my right--I must exert effort in both to move forward. I cannot jump on one foot alone... Franca's thoughts were lucid, yet she was uncertain how to proceed. Sigh, I cannot muster the courage to broach the subject... Should I seek help from Browns and her companions?

As Franca paced the room, she suddenly heard a knock on the bedroom door.

Jenna? Franca paused and turned towards the door.

"Enter, please."

Jenna, donned in a beige fluffy dress, stood before the door.

"Why the sudden politeness?" Franca inquired, feeling slightly uneasy.

Jenna chuckled in exasperation.

"Dammit! I've always been polite, okay? It's just that you never shut the door. You only close it when you sleep. How am I supposed to knock?"

With that remark, Jenna wore a vexed expression.

She regained composure and flashed a smile.

"Are you grappling with the Pleasure potion's digestion? Do you lack a target for its digestion?"

"Yes, but as I mentioned before…" Franca began to defend herself.

Jenna cut in, "What about me?"

"Huh?" Franca was caught off guard.

She questioned if she was imagining things.

Jenna's lovely face displayed a charming smile, reminiscent of her days as the Showy Diva, Little Minx.

She pushed aside strands of hair falling from her ears and grinned.

"Didn't you inform the Demoness of Black that we're lovers?

"Then why not turn to me for Pleasure potion digestion?"

"B-but…" Franca was bewildered. "Why are you doing this?"

Jenna approached Franca, maintaining her enticing smile.

"I want to experience pleasure. I'll become one in the future."

Surprise shifted to shock. Franca examined Jenna, wondering if she had undergone a sudden change.

Franca only snapped out of her reverie when Jenna halted in front of her, and a familiar fragrance filled her senses. She blurted out, "Are you trying to help me? Are you aiding me in this aspect because I've been without a partner for Pleasure digestion for so long?"

Jenna stopped and chuckled.

"That's one reason."

She gazed up at Franca's face and sincerely praised, "You're so beautiful…"

Franca fell silent for a moment before posing a serious question, "Do you like me?"

"I do," Jenna replied promptly. Her eyes glinted as she smiled and added, "You're so lively, interesting, and captivating. Why wouldn't I like you?"

Franca bit her red, moist lips.

"Then, do you love me? In a non-platonic sense."

Jenna fell silent.

She cast her gaze downward and pursed her lips.

"I don't want to deceive you. To me, you're a beacon of light that brightens my life, offering hope and warmth. You're the person I trust the most, my closest friend, and the perfect sister in my heart. However, I've never envisioned romantic love between us."

Franca's heart sank at the words "I don't want to deceive you," and an inexplicable ache surged within her.

A shiver ran down her spine.

She raised her right hand and shifted it slightly.

"Then, I can't…"

"Dammit! Why must you make things so complicated?" Jenna was already feeling bashful, embarrassed, and torn. She struggled to conceal it and convinced herself it was just an act. Upon hearing Franca's refusal, she finally erupted. "Can't we have sex without love? Are you truly a Demoness devoted solely to love?"

"I just feel…" Franca faltered. "I can handle others, but not you. I can't bear the thought of you sacrificing yourself…"

Before she could finish, Jenna's tender lips pressed against hers, exploring and nibbling with an unpracticed finesse.

Franca couldn't resist, swept away by Jenna's lips and tongue, fueled by long-awaited anticipation, months of restraint, the lingering influence of Demon corruption, and the effects of the Pleasure potion.

She succumbed to it until Jenna pulled back, panting.

"Sacrifice, my foot! Quit playing innocent. Haven't you always joked about letting me experience true pleasure? Get with it!" Jenna's cheeks flushed as she glared at Franca with moist eyes, resembling a fervent and assertive lion cub.

Franca suddenly felt that during Jenna's days in the market district as Little Minx, a small part of her personality might not have been an act but something she already possessed.

Jenna kissed her again, and Franca couldn't deny the allure.

As she relished the fragrant, sweet, and passionate pleasures, she couldn't shake off the realization that this was merely assistance, not love.

In that moment, a phrase echoed in her mind: In pain we find pleasure, in pleasure we drown.

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Chapter 656 Choosing a Reward

Lumian once again encountered Monsieur Iveljsta, who resided in B18. He still wore a fluffy black hat adorned with a white feather and a complex black robe.

With a quick glance, Lumian had already covertly used Weakness Investigation to search for pale-white marks on Iveljsta's body, ready for potential assassinations and surprise attacks.

Aurore and Emperor Roselle had always emphasized the need to stay vigilant against others at all times!

Of course, Lumian felt that the two of them hadn't done a good job in this matter. Otherwise, they would still be active in the world.

At that moment, the pallor on Iveljsta's body concentrated on his dark-brown eyes, emitting an illusory quality that seemed unreal.

Does this mean he can quickly transform into a Wraith, and his eyes are no longer his weakness? As Lumian pondered, he gestured towards the divan in the living room.

"Let's chat there."

Ludwig, seated at the dining table, glanced at Iveljsta for a few seconds before lowering his head and continuing his meal with a succulent piece of beef.

Iveljsta nodded slightly and entered the living room quietly, taking a seat in a corner of the divan.

Are you a student at a primary school? So disciplined… Lumian criticized as he focused on observing Iverista's luck.

It was relatively normal and nothing special.

At that moment, Lumian suddenly had a few thoughts.

Luck Observation and Weakness Investigation require the eyes to determine the target's color. However, one focuses on the background color, while the other captures the various colors on the surface of the body. When I become a Fate Appropriator, could these two abilities fuse and mutate into a more special ability?

Why can I only use my eyes to observe these two abilities? Is a blind Reaper incapable of attacking a target's weakness? Similarly, is a blind Ascetic unqualified to observe others' luck? Can't they rely on their spirituality and ears and nose?

Or could it be done at a higher Sequence?

Lumian eased into the armchair, positioning himself at an angle across from Iveljsta. Flashing a friendly smile, he asked, "What's the matter?"

He spoke in Intisian.

Iveljsta, as silent as a corpse, straightened up. His eyes, deep as he spoke in ancient Feysac.

"Allow me to introduce myself. Iveljsta Eggers, a member of the Rose School of Thought and temperance faction under the Church of The Fool."

Lumian's nerves, already tense, heightened. Nevertheless, he maintained a relaxed demeanor, confirming, "Are you Twanaku's liaison?"

He switched to ancient Feysac.

"No," Iveljsta shook his head, "I've already eliminated that member fifteen minutes ago."

Fifteen minutes ago, when I was still with the patrol team… However, you can't expect me to believe you just because you say so… Lumian feigned curiosity and asked, "I recall that you arrived in Port Pylos before Twanaku was exposed. What was your original motive?"

"I'm investigating the primitive forest in this area. I'm still in the early stages of gathering more information," Iveljsta replied seriously. "Four days ago, I came into contact with Twanaku and obtained some information from him. He seemed fine and was very restrained."

He's indeed restrained. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a second serial murder case in Port Pylos only after four years… Going to the primitive forest to investigate… The primitive forest… On the surface, the incident in Tizamo Town was a sudden attack by a tribe in the primitive forest. Lumian quickly made many connections and said to Iveljsta thoughtfully, "Twanaku once did something in Tizamo Town that involved the tribes in the nearby primitive forest. Some of his important items seem to be hidden in Tizamo Town. It might also be related to a Nois family Demon of unknown Sequence."

Iveljsta listened in silence, lost in thought.

After a few seconds, he said to Lumian, "Thank you for providing this information. It might not be useful for my investigation, but it can let me know what to be wary of."

He didn't specify his mission. Clearly, he needed his superior's permission.

Lumian responded nonchalantly, "Even if I don't tell you now, you'll find out tonight or tomorrow."

Having already reported the matter to Madam Magician, the Major Arcana card holder would undoubtedly inform the Church of The Fool and the temperance faction in detail subsequently. It wouldn't only be a general outline that mentioned key personnel like before.

Iveljsta nodded with restraint and said, "I'm here to express my gratitude and to inform you that we're already investigating any potential problems and latent dangers.

"Also, if you need help in Matani, feel free to come to me."

"Alright." Lumian didn't stand on ceremony.

After delving into the more serious matters, Lumian, intrigued, asked Iveljsta, "Why did you add the Rose School of Thought prefix when you introduced yourself? You've already left the Rose School of Thought and joined the Church of The Fool. It sounds as if the Rose School of Thought is affiliated with the Church of The Fool."

"Our leader specifically requested this. She always believes that we are the true orthodox branch of the Rose School of Thought. Only we represent the Rose School of Thought. Those traitors should change the organization's name, not us," Iveljsta explained in detail.

Sounds quite stubborn… Aren't you from the temperance faction? Don't you restrain your emotions and desires in this aspect? Yes, Sequence 5 is Wraith, close to evil spirits, and evil spirits have an extreme side. Is this reflected in High-Sequence Beyonders of the temperance faction's corresponding pathway? Lumian didn't quite understand and tried to make a guess based on the available information.

He was just chatting and had no intention of inquiring further. Instead, he asked,

"Your last name is Eggers. Was your ancestor a member of the Balam Empire's royal family?"

"Yes," Iveljsta replied proudly, his emotions held in check. "And my mother's lineage is noble from the Highlands Kingdom."

For many in the Southern Continent, the surname Eggers bore unparalleled prestige. It was a symbol of a deity who had once trod the land, a representation of Death's dominion over the world.

But Lumian's curiosity wandered elsewhere.

"I've heard that the mausoleums of the Balam Empire's nobles are constructed upside down underground, much like this hotel. What mystical significance does that hold? Is it simply a way to confront death? And why is death associated with the underground? Shouldn't the Underworld exist in the spirit world?"

This was the question that piqued Lumian's interest upon learning about the matter.

His understanding of mysticism was limited.

Iveljsta pondered for a moment and then explained, "I didn't choose the Death pathway. The construction method originated from ancient times, passed down by all the Eggers ancestors, devoted to the deity who controlled death.

"He embodies the very concept of death. Emulating Him is a way to approach the source of death.

"This mystic explanation resonates with me the most. Over the years, I've heard various interpretations:

"Some see life and death as opposing mystical concepts. They argue that, just as we stand upright and grow upwards in life, burial upside down signifies the contradiction and connection between life and death.

"Others believe that true hell isn't in the spirit world or the Underworld, but deep underground. Descending further symbolizes reaching true hell and returning to the essence of death. Thus, mausoleums are built upside down, reflecting our intention to face hell, worship death, and return to the source. This is the essence and symbol of mysticism."

Some Beyonders of the Death pathway don't really approve of the Underworld… Can you discover true hell by delving deep underground? Heh heh, hasn't anyone informed you that the world we're on is essentially a planet? Does this extension reach underground magma and the core? Do they believe that's the genuine hell? Going deeper will traverse the core and the magma, but that'll merely be the other side of the planet, let alone true hell… Lumian found himself increasingly entertained as he listened.

Suddenly, he was taken aback.

What exists on the opposite side of the planet?

I only know of the Northern and Southern Continents. Considering the time difference, they're nearly on the same side…

If this world is genuinely a planet, there must be another side. But I've never heard of any continents—just an expansive sea?

Wait, how did those giant fellows from the New City of Silver emerge from the Forsaken Land of the Gods… Something must have occurred on the continent on the other side of the planet, abandoned by the deities. Could that be why it's known as the Forsaken Land of the Gods?

If I have a chance in the future, I could revisit the New City of Silver and explore the library for books related to the Forsaken Land of the Gods…

Lumian reined in his thoughts and continued conversing with Iveljsta for a while. Eventually, he escorted the former descendant of the Balam Empire's royal family, a member of the temperance faction, away from this floor.

Not long after returning to his room, the doll messenger arrived with a response from Madam Magician.

"The information and insights you've gathered this time are exceptionally valuable. It's no wonder my spiritual perception guided me to let you visit the New City of Silver after the Hanth Island Demon incident.

"Reflecting on it, your encounter with Naboredisley seemed almost coincidental. You followed the clues to Hanth Island. Hmm, you should grasp the significance, right?

"The situation in this matter both reassures me and intensifies my vigilance and anxiety. When that entity stands by our side, these details are incredibly useful. However, He won't always be with us. When our objectives clash, I can't fathom what challenges we'll face. The same goes for you and me.

"Therefore, Hunters must rely more on their personal growth amidst blood, fire, chaos, and conflict. Many Hunters meet their end, using their bones to forge the Red Priest who conquers all.

"We've already initiated an internal review. It involves a considerable number of individuals and will take a substantial amount of time to complete. Considering your contributions, besides converting the Beyonder characteristic into a Sealed Artifact, you have the option to choose a reward. Pick one out of two. Here are your choices.

"1: the potion formula for the Hunter pathway's Sequence 4 Iron-blooded Knight. 2: I'll assist you in divining clues about the remaining parts of the Abscessed Hand's body."

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Chapter 657 Tizamo Town

Reading Madam Magician's two choices, Lumian fell into deep thought.

These were incredible rewards!

It had to be known that reaching Sequence 4 marked a crucial point for Beyonders, a moment of qualitative transformation. From then on, one could attain godhood and become a half-human, half-god entity. Most Beyonders would never get this far. This wasn't just about becoming a demigod; it also included seeing or obtaining related items firsthand.

A Sequence 4 potion formula was usually priceless!

Moreover, this was a Sequence 4 potion formula related to Lumian's own pathway.

As for the reward of divining clues about the rest of the Abscessed Hand's body, it symbolized the promise and assistance of an Angel. Ordinary Beyonders wouldn't even dream of such a chance, let alone receive an opportunity. They could only read about Angels gaining the Lord's permission and responding to believers' prayers in various Churches.

Furthermore, Lumian needed to address this issue.

After advancing to a Sequence 5 Reaper, his top priority was finding the remaining parts of the Abscessed Hand's body. Without completing this task, the formula, the ingredients, the digestion process, and the prepared ritual wouldn't give him a shot at becoming a demigod in time due to the unfulfilled promise and the oath's restrictions. Regret wouldn't even be an option.

Lumian had no clue how to locate it by himself. His only plan was to mimic the incantation for summoning the Abscessed Hand and craft a new series of summoning incantations. He hoped to summon the spirit world creature's legs, arms, body, and head.

However, this was a risky endeavor. In his dream, Lumian learned from his sister that when the summoning incantation lacked clarity and had no restrictions, the summoned entity could be unpredictable. It might be a demigod-level spirit world creature filled with malice, capable of killing the summoner instantly.

Lumian couldn't pinpoint the precise direction due to the unknown fragmentation of the Abscessed Hand's body. It could be a relatively intact body missing a hand, or it might have shattered into tiny, peanut-sized fragments. Describing it accurately was impossible. He could only experiment repeatedly, narrowing down the possibilities. It was akin to playing with his life.

More importantly, Lumian had already combed through the comprehensive information on common spirit world creatures provided by Madam Magician. Still, he found nothing that seemed to be other parts of the Abscessed Hand's body.

Lumian desired the Sequence 4 Iron-blooded Knight potion formula and clues about the rest of the Abscessed Hand's body.

This was the reason why he couldn't make a decision.

He pondered whether to teleport back to Trier now and seek Franca or Jenna's help in divination, hoping their spiritual insights would provide him with valuable hints.

As these thoughts raced through his mind, Lumian reached a decision.

The second option!

This was because he remembered something important. Mr. Hanged Man's reward had yet to materialize. It was an opportunity to explore the Blue Avenger, a ghost ship that was a relic of the Tudor Empire.

Considering that the Blood Emperor Alista Tudor was once a true god of the Hunter pathway and a half-mad Red Priest, the Tudor Empire's inheritance contained the Sequence 4 potion formula of the Hunter pathway, along with Beyonder ingredients and characteristics. It was something to look forward to.

Lumian promptly sat down and penned a reply to Madam Magician, expressing his thoughts. He also informed her that he would be heading to Tizamo Town to investigate Hisoka's inheritance.

…

At 4 p.m., Camus Castiya, accompanied by three dark-brown Southern Continent natives, knocked on the door of Suite 7 on B3 of Hotel Orella.

"They all hail from Tizamo, born and bred. They only ventured to Port Pylos in search of opportunities upon reaching adulthood," Camus explained in Intisian, introducing the two men and one woman. "One is a supplier of Gwadar berries, another married a local and toils at the port, and the third took a less lawful path as a thief."

One is a relatively wealthy merchant, the other is a dockworker, and the other is a thief. They happen to be at three different social levels, and they are from both genders. This will allow me to understand the situation in Tizamo to the greatest extent and comprehensively. Camus is very professional in this aspect. As expected of a former Public Security Officer… Lumian nodded slightly and asked the three subjects in fluent Dutanese, "I'm a scholar of folklore en route to Tizamo. But before that, I'd like to learn more about the town. My Dutanese is a bit rusty, so Mr. Camus will assist in translation."

"We'll heed Officer Camus," responded the eldest merchant with a smile, quickly seconded by the others.

Lumian turned to Lugano and instructed, "I'll take one to the master bedroom for an exchange. You can entertain the other two."

"Alright," Lugano replied promptly.

Inside the master bedroom, Lumian courteously seated the merchant in an armchair, positioning himself at the edge of the bed. Speaking in Intisian, he inquired, "What's the primary produce of Tizamo?"

Camus, translating, wore a puzzled expression.

Is Louis Berry truly planning a journey to Tizamo?

It's evident he's tracing Twanaku's footsteps!

Camus assumed the role of an Interrogator, staring down at the seated merchant as he conveyed Lumian's words.

The merchant, filled with trepidation, responded, "Sir, we mainly cultivate Gwadar berries, spices, and forest fruits. Numerous plantations dot the surroundings, and we often venture into the forest for hunting, selling both meat and fur. Additionally, we cut down trees for crafting coffins.

"That's… that's about it. The remaining effort goes into planting corn and potatoes for our own consumption."

Lumian absorbed the information and refined his understanding of Dutanese through Camus's translation.

Engaging in casual conversation, Lumian explored the daily lives, sustenance, and leisure activities of the Tizamo residents.

From the merchant's account, Lumian painted a mental picture of Tizamo.

Its populace mainly consisted of locals, with outsiders being the proprietors of nearby plantations and some acquired slaves. Thanks to the hunting services provided to the Port Pylos gentry, Tizamo maintained a connection with the outside world, avoiding isolation and conservativism.

Although the faith in Death had been eradicated, traces of it lingered in daily life. The townspeople primarily believed in the Eternal Blazing Sun, yet remnants of Death faith were evident, such as frequent visits to the cemetery and the practice of not burying prematurely deceased children in coffins. Each adult prepared a coffin for themselves in advance, and the common means of travel involved using a coffin.

With keen interest, Lumian concluded the discussion and inquired, "Are you familiar with Twanaku Tupián?"

Finally getting into the meat… Camus exhaled quietly and conveyed the question to the merchant.

A warm smile appeared on the merchant's face.

"I do! He's well-known in town."

"Why?" Camus interjected.

The merchant, with an obsequious smile, responded, "Sir, he should be your colleague. Twanaku is the first person from Tizamo to join the patrol team. Moreover, he's rapidly advancing in rank. He's a source of pride for us."

Lumian couldn't help but emit a soft chuckle.

"I'm quite curious about Twanaku's past."

The merchant's expression shifted slightly as he glanced around.

"Sirs, did Twanaku commit a crime? Did he join an organization that believes in Death?"

Quite perceptive… Lumian thought, while Camus grumbled in a low voice, "Are we doing the questioning or are you? Just answer truthfully!"

Under the mental pressure of the Interrogator, the dark-

skinned merchant replied with a trembling voice, "I've known for a long time that this young man, Twanaku, will surely become extraordinary, but I also know he'll one day tread the path of blasphemy against a deity."

Seeing Camus and Lumian awaiting further explanation, the merchant continued, "There was a fire in the Twanaku family. All his kin perished, and only he survived. According to our customs, he's favored by a deity, spared from death. Such individuals often go on to achieve great feats."

The deity's favor refers to Death here, right? Not succumbing to Death is considered receiving Death's favor? Lumian interjected thoughtfully.

"The fire happened about six years ago?"

"How did you know?" the surprised merchant asked. Then, slapping his forehead, he added, "I'm such a fool. You must have investigated it beforehand."

From the looks of it, the fire somehow brought Twanaku back to life, transforming him into Hisoka… Lumian nodded.

"Continue."

Recalling, the merchant said, "Since then, Twanaku fell silent, as if in shock. He no longer participated in Mass or entered the cathedral of God. Later, he left Tizamo for Port Pylos."

Was Twanaku unafraid of scrutiny for acting so unusually? Did he not bother to feign his faith? By then, Hisoka had already become a Beyonder of the Devil pathway, making it impossible for him to participate in the Eternal Blazing Sun Church's Mass? Where did his first potion come from? Lumian pondered while Camus translated and asked, "Does Twanaku frequently return to Tizamo?"

"He comes back to Tizamo every year. I'm not sure how often or for how long," the merchant truthfully replied.

"Where does he stay when he returns to Tizamo?" Lumian inquired further.

The merchant smoothly replied, "At his own place. After joining the patrol team and amassing wealth, he rebuilt the burnt-down house."

Rebuilt the house that was destroyed in the fire… Lumian contemplated for a moment and then asked, "Are there any special folklore festivals in Tizamo?"

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Chapter 658 Deep Desire

The merchant responded cautiously to Camus's translation, "Sir, we don't really have any special folklore festivals. We only celebrate two festivals every year. One is the Sun Sacrifice in December, and the other is the New Sun Festival in June."

The Sun Sacrifice was a recurring festival for the Eternal Blazing Sun Church, marking the day with the longest daylight of the year when the sun reached its zenith at noon.

In the Northern Continent, it took place in mid-to-late June, while in the Southern Continent, due to the reversed seasons, it occurred in mid-to-late December.

The New Sun Festival, originating from the believers of the Southern Continent's Eternal Blazing Sun, involved celebrations during the longest night and shortest days, welcoming the return of the sun and anticipating more light and warmer weather.

This celebration often coincided with the New Year in many parts of the Southern Continent, gradually merging the two festivities.

The merchant explained that the citizens of Tizamo Town solely celebrated festivals connected to the Eternal Blazing Sun, having abandoned the traditions related to Death.

He reflected for a moment and added, "It's been like this for a long time—since my grandfather was born."

Matani, particularly Port Pylos and the gold mine city of Devise, had been Intis's colony for nearly a century. The native population was compelled to convert generations ago, becoming followers of the Eternal Blazing Sun. This, however, was limited to areas effectively managed by colonial institutions in the past.

When Lumian arrived in Port Pylos, his first impression was: at the docks, in the heart of the city, it resembled the port cities of Intis. Yet, the workers' skin was darker and browner. The streets frequented by Intisians and Feynapotterians were sparsely populated and desolate. After passing Hotel Orella and exploring other areas of Port Pylos, various buildings with West Balam characteristics emerged. More pedestrians populated the streets, and the echoes of Dutanese filled the air.

Lumian sought further details, indirectly confirming the merchant's words. Interrogator Camus discerned no signs of deception.

"What things have left a deep impression on you since you were young that you still remember from time to time?" Lumian shifted the conversation.

Recalling, the merchant replied, "Grand funerals… Newly built coffins…

"The primitive tribe that clashes with us every year… The occasional scream at night because of them…

"Everyone's hardworking, calm, and well-educated. We get angry, but we don't argue on the spot or shout. We choose to find the padre, officers, and judges to determine who's right and who's wrong…"

Camus translated the merchant's words to Lumian, adding a few comments.

"That's indeed the case. I've been to Tizamo. The people there are very docile. Even if they're treated unfairly, they rarely resist violently. The manor owners of the surrounding plantations love to hire them, reducing the cost of buying slaves.

"Of course, it's not that they're emotionless and won't resist. Instead, they tend to abide by order and follow the official processes to resolve problems. I-I guess they can be considered outstanding believers of the Eternal Blazing Sun?"

The honorific name of the Eternal Blazing Sun contained the description "Embodiment of Order."

As a member of the Feynapotter royal lineage, Camus undoubtedly believed in the Earth Mother. He knew that Louis Berry hailed from the Intis Republic and was likely a believer of the Eternal Blazing Sun.

Lumian stood up, extending his arms with a smile. "Praise the Sun!"

"Praise the Sun!" The merchant hastily followed suit.

Lumian settled back into his seat, contemplating for a few fleeting moments.

"Have you experienced any strange dreams?"

The merchant nodded, then shook his head.

"Many, but they slip away from memory. Do you not encounter such dreams?"

Indeed. Dreams often elude the control of one's consciousness. They can reveal spiritual insights, mirror suppressed desires, or reflect events from the day. Sometimes, these elements intertwine, resulting in strange and unpredictable dreams. I, too, frequently encounter such dreams. In the past, when I battled the Demon corruption, they were even more bizarre and exaggerated… Lumian sensed that the merchant's response was impeccable.

If the other party could pinpoint a specific strange dream, that might raise suspicion.

Either the dream was exceptionally strange and unforgettable, or the merchant was abnormal and had prepared in advance before coming.

After discussing other matters, Lumian escorted the merchant out of the master bedroom.

The responses of the other two Tizamons were similar to the merchant's, only supplementing the details they observed at their level and sharing encounters with their own characteristics.

Lumian found no traces of the Dream Festival.

If the Dream Festival is genuinely linked to Tizamo, there's only one possibility: When the townsfolk fall asleep, they enter a dream world to celebrate the festival. Upon waking, they forget everything…

Or, there's another possibility. Two factions may be involved in Hisoka's Tizamo Town prank. First, the citizens of Tizamo. Second, the primitive tribe in the nearby forest. Could the Dream Festival be a celebration for that primitive tribe?

Hisoka's prank impacted the Dream Festival, leading the primitive tribe to suddenly attack Tizamo, resulting in significant casualties and concealing the traces of his advancement ritual to Desire Apostle. Lumian pondered as he walked Camus and the three Tizamons to the door.

Upon returning to the master bedroom, he stood before the desk and gazed at the stone wall in front of him. His eyes flickered with anticipation and unease.

His decision to stay in the Southern Continent and actively pursue Hisoka's inheritance was indeed to grow amid blood, fire, chaos, and conflict, securing more acting opportunities. He aimed to open the door to godhood and advance to Sequence 4 as soon as possible.

The reason for his impatience was: he saw a glimmer of hope in reviving his sister!

The state of the Naboredisleys on Hanth Island provided him with that glimmer of hope.

This hope stemmed from the belief that a high-ranking figure of the Earth Mother Church might possess the ability to divide another person's soul. This would allow each soul fragment to grow into a relatively separate individual through rebirth.

Aurore's soul fragment was sealed within Lumian's body.

Perhaps a high-ranking member of the Church of Earth Mother could use one or more soul fragments to resurrect Aurore in a new form!

Lumian wasn't certain if such a plan could be realized or if it constituted true "resurrection," but it was the most plausible method he had encountered so far. He was determined to give it a try.

Of course, he couldn't experiment with Aurore's soul fragment directly. His plan was to deliberately create some soul fragments in future cullings and seek help from the Church of Earth Mother to see if they could be reborn and if the person who returned was the same individual.

Once all the details were confirmed, he would revive Aurore.

Lumian didn't believe he had the qualifications to collaborate with the Church of Earth Mother. Only by becoming a demigod and relying on the secret organization, the Tarot Club, could he gain the Church of Earth Mother's attention and fulfill the transaction conditions proposed by the other party.

For this, Lumian couldn't wait to obtain godhood and advance to Sequence 4.

At times, Lumian wished his sister were also a Blessed of Celestial Worthy and had inherited the ancient castle. This way, her resurrection might be more straightforward.

Yes, to extract Aurore's soul fragment, I must undo Mr. Fool's seal. To undo his seal, I have to wait for Termiboros to become very weak. For Termiboros to weaken, I need to continuously extract his power at a higher level. And to withstand the power of a higher level, I have to possess godhood and advance step by step… Lumian's thoughts gradually clarified, and he unprecedentedly yearned for an advancement.

…

Trier, Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, Apartment 702, 9 Rue Orosai.

Franca lay on the bed beneath a velvet blanket, her cheeks still flushed, eyes moist, and her expression unusually complicated.

Beside her, Jenna rested under the same velvet cover. She had slipped into a deep slumber, her brows furrowed with a mix of exhaustion, satisfaction, resistance, and nostalgia. Her outstretched arms and exposed fair skin still bore traces of the recent fervor.

Franca gazed at Jenna and let out a sudden sigh.

The experience had exceeded her expectations, yet a sense of emptiness lingered in her heart.

It was beautiful in the moment, but what would transpire after the digestion of the Pleasure potion?

Could physical intimacy and emotional distance coexist?

Did overwhelming pleasure pave the way for sorrow? Was it the agony of sinking into oblivion while resisting salvation?

Sigh… Franca released another soft sigh.

She sensed that her Pleasure potion had been substantially digested.

…

Matani State, Port Pylos.

Lumian, sipping a glass of Gwadar, looked up and spoke to Lugano as if discussing the weather.

"We're heading to Tizamo Town today. Will you join Ludwig and me, or will you stay here and wait for us?

"Let me warn you in advance. The situation in Tizamo Town might be very dangerous."

Very dangerous… He wanted to say he'd stay in Port Pylos, but memories of Father Montserrat flashed in his mind.

Gritting his teeth, he replied, "I'm with you."

If danger lurked in Tizamo Town, he could rely on his boss to bail him out. But here? Only himself!

Lumian nodded slightly and didn't say more.

After checking out and hitting the street, he chuckled at Lugano and Ludwig, "Do we take a coffin to Tizamo, or should we grab a carriage?"

Before Lugano and Ludwig could answer, a four-wheeled, four-seater carriage rolled up from under the shade.

The carriage's driver, a young man, kept his head low, not daring to look away.

Coming to a stop, Camus Castiya emerged. He forced a smile and said to Lumian, "Thanks for your help these past days. I'll escort you to Tizamo."

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Chapter 659 Poor "Monster"

Observing Camus's expression, as if compelled to act at gunpoint, Lumian didn't hold back. He replied with a smile, "I'd like that."

It was evident to him that the brass of the patrol team, or even Admiral Querarill himself, was concerned about Louis Berry wandering around their territory. Tizamo, where he was headed, was located near the primitive forest and had close ties to a Sequence 5 Desire Apostle. Therefore, two additional patrol team members with a certain relationship with Louis Berry were sent to accompany him. Even if they couldn't prevent trouble, they could at least send word before it became a catastrophe.

As for why they didn't directly stop Louis Berry from heading to Tizamo Town, it was partly because Lumian had hinted at the faction backing him when he submitted Twanaku's head. Without a conflict of principles, Admiral Querarill likely wouldn't make things difficult for him. Secondly, Louis Berry's investigations and adventures seemed to bring calamity, but they had exposed hidden dangers ahead of time. If the problem remained concealed and continued to evolve, Matani and Admiral Querarill might not be able to handle it in a year or two. When the time came, blood might flow like a river.

Kolobo, acting as the carriage driver, gazed ahead stonily. He fumbled for a pair of sunglasses and slid them onto the bridge of his nose. There were no visible injuries on his body.

As Camus held the carriage door open, he watched Louis Berry board, leading a young boy by the hand.

"He's going to Tizamo too?" Camus blurted in surprise.

He had assumed Louis Berry would leave his servant and godson at Hotel Orella, joining them later after dealing with Tizamo Town's issues. However, the adventurer was now bringing a young child to Tizamo, and it was evident this wasn't a leisurely trip. It was very dangerous!

Lumian's left foot remained on the ground, and his right foot halted at the carriage's edge. He smiled and spoke, "My godson is fascinated by jungle fruits, the unique beasts I hunt, and various spices."

Earlier, the Tizamons had mentioned their hometown's specialties, highlighting the excellence of roasted meat. The blend of spices and the distinctive gamey flavor of wild beasts in the forest contributed to Tizamo Town's unique delicacies.

Ludwig, already settled in the carriage, swallowed, seemingly in sync with Lumian.

Aren't you worried about endangering your godson? Why are you so confident? Camus didn't press, simply signaling Lugano with his eyes to hurry up.

Lugano cast a glance at the peculiar carriage driver, who trembled slightly beneath his black sunglasses. He entered the carriage and took a seat across from Lumian and Ludwig.

Camus shut the carriage door and settled beside Kolobo. With a sigh, he remarked, "You can remove your sunglasses now. It's been hard on you."

"Alright, alright, alright." Kolobo seemed to shiver as if struck by an icy wind. His teeth chattered, and his tremors intensified.

Camus turned to him, surprised.

"Didn't you strike a deal face-to-face with Louis Berry? Why are you still so afraid?"

Not seeing him directly again!

"Alright, alright, alright." Kolobo removed his sunglasses, taking more than ten seconds to compose himself.

In a hushed tone, he confessed with fear, "I feel like my fingers, my arms, my insides, even my head… all eaten.

"That, that…"

"That what?" Camus struggled to comprehend why the Monster's demeanor had shifted so drastically, sensing that the issue might be significant.

Kolobo swallowed hard and continued, "That… that child… is also… very dangerous!

"Though I haven't laid eyes on him, I sense a looming threat, like facing a lion, a tiger, a python, ready to eat me at any moment."

"…" Camus was stunned, a hiss escaping his lips.

Until now, Kolobo had never exhibited such fear except in the presence of three individuals radiating danger: Desire Apostle Twanaku with Wraith powers, and Louis Berry, capable of hunting Twanaku. Could this boy match them?

Is he also a Beyonder, perhaps a Sequence 5 Beyonder?

No, it's not merely a Sequence 5 matter. Our patrol team's captain is a Sequence 5, yet Kolobo never mentioned feeling such foreboding in his presence.

There must be something unique about these three individuals!

Regardless, the boy is undoubtedly extraordinary and hazardous!

No wonder Louis Berry is bringing his godson to Tizamo without worry. Perhaps the child poses an even greater threat… Camus unraveled his earlier confusion, stifling his curiosity, refraining from probing further with Kolobo.

In the confines of the four-wheeled carriage, even with the barrier between them, Louis Berry caught wind of their hushed exchange!

Considering the intel gleaned from the Fog Sea, Camus harbored suspicions that Louis Berry was a Sequence 5 Beyonder following the Hunter pathway. Those of this pathway were renowned for their sharp senses—exceptional vision, acute sense of smell, and keen hearing.

A Beyonder of the Monster pathway is quite intriguing. Even without laying eyes on Ludwig or hearing his voice, Louis can sense his ominous aura, a being who devours everything… Lumian, leaning against the carriage wall, toyed with his golden straw hat, shooting Ludwig a knowing smile.

Could it be that this "little child" has truly taken a liking to Kolobo and Camus?

Indeed. These are two Beyonders who haven't succumbed to severe corruption. Ludwig likely had a momentary lapse in control… Heh heh, Camus may not have noticed, but Kolobo reacted instantly, sensing the danger? Lumian acknowledged Ludwig with a nod.

"Well done. Your restraint is admirable."

Praise was due when a child behaved correctly, fostering a healthy mindset and habits!

Ludwig remained silent, his expression conveying he was not to be treated as a child.

A faint smile graced his lips as he retrieved a box of biscuits from his crimson school bag, nibbling on them.

What restraint… What did he mean by "well done"… Lugano, seated across from him, found himself perplexed.

Tizamo stood as the most remote town in Port Pylos, nestled against the edge of the primitive forest. A full two hours' journey by carriage was required to reach it.

Of course, for those in a hurry, an alternative route existed: boarding a steam locomotive from the port to Cahert, the southernmost town. From there, a carriage or coffin could be hired to venture northeast, shaving the travel time to Tizamo down to just an hour. However, Lumian showed no inclination towards haste.

As they departed Port Pylos, the road gradually narrowed and deteriorated. Yet, the carriage pressed on steadily. Kolobo, the carriage driver, operated with precision akin to a well-

oiled machine, guiding the horses and carriage without falter.

An hour slipped by, and the carriage wound its way through the forest.

Abruptly, Lumian, pretending to slumber, snapped open his eyes.

His body turned dark and spectral, melding with the shadows cast by the window.

Shadow Transformation!

In an instant, gunshots pierced the forest's tranquility.

Bullets whizzed from afar, some thudding into the earth, kicking up clouds of soil, while others took aim at Camus, the carriage, and the horse.

Amidst the chaos, the horse crumpled, bleeding profusely, and the carriage toppled to the ground.

Kolobo had already abandoned his perch as the driver, escaping unscathed from the barrage of gunfire. Camus leaped clear of the carriage in advance, crouching low, revolver in hand. He maneuvered with agility, at times rolling, at others slithering deeper into the undergrowth.

With each movement, he unleashed shots, seeking to suppress the unseen assailant. In this range, many of his abilities were restricted.

A handful of fiery crimson orbs, almost blindingly white, streaked past Camus, disappearing into the forest's depths.

Rumble!

Amidst the thunderous explosions, the gunfire abruptly ceased.

Soon after, curses in Dutanese rang out from the forest's depths.

"Go to hell, you Northern Continent bandits!

"Rot with your sons of bitches!

"Come after us if you have the guts!

"…"

Gradually, the curses faded into the forest's depths.

Lumian emerged from the shadows of the carriage, opting not to pursue.

"It's the Resistance! What are they doing in Matani…" Camus frowned, muttering to himself in confusion.

In the Southern Continent, numerous Resistance factions abounded. He couldn't discern which faction they belonged to or their motives. Typically, Matani, ostensibly independent from the Intis Republic and governed by Admiral Querarill, a Southern Continent native, saw little Resistance activity. Their primary demand was the expulsion of colonists.

Could it be a faction of the Resistance dedicated to Death, aiming to revive Death's influence in Matani? Please not the Rose School of Thought-backed Resistance. No, those lunatics… Camus returned to the carriage, puzzled.

Lumian mulled over another matter.

Despite attaining Sequence 5 status, life still felt fragile.

Vulnerable to being shot dead!

If a Resistance member possessed sharpshooting skills and remained beyond his observational range, sniping from over 100 meters, they could have ended his life.

Reapers lacked the resilient bodies of Devils. While lacking Malicious Perception, Devils might sustain only minor wounds from rifle shots. Their absence of long-range Danger Premonition characteristic of Seer pathways rendered them unable to preemptively evade.

Granted, Lumian's Ascetic traits bolstered his spiritual perception. Anticipating danger, he had foreseen the attack.

Yet, if the adversary could nullify his spiritual perception or manipulate it effectively, conventional rifles could indeed imperil Lumian.

Yes, Shadow Transformation can serve as a shield. Bullets lacking special effects pose no genuine threat to shadow beings… Lumian redirected his thoughts, instructing Lugano, emerging from the carriage, "Check on the horse."

If it survived, attend to its injuries promptly for carriage duty. If not, Ludwig would command the equine corpse to pull the carriage.

After all, Ludwig had gained the ability to command a handful of low-level undead from a concoction brewed from Hisoka's eyeballs.

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Chapter 660 Across the Door

Without hesitation, Lugano pushed himself up and hurried to the fallen horse, carefully examining it.

After a few seconds, he exclaimed regretfully, "It's dead!"

The poor horse was unlucky. Despite being over a hundred meters away, it was hit twice by a flurry of gunshots. One bullet struck its side, and the other hit its head. It couldn't be any more dead.

In contrast, the carriage driver remained unscathed. At most, he had scraped his skin during the tumble.

Lumian glanced at Kolobo, who had his back turned to him and the others, seemingly on guard against any potential attacks from the depths of the forest. He led Ludwig, who had been thrown from the carriage, to the side of the motionless, bleeding horse corpse.

"Stop the bleeding," Lumian instructed Lugano.

Why stop it when the horse is already dead? Although Lugano didn't understand, he extended his shimmering palm.

After the dead horse's wounds closed, Lumian turned to Ludwig and said, "Your turn."

Ludwig, dressed in a child's formal attire, nodded slightly.

He extended his right palm, gripping the dead horse with his five fingers, and slowly raised it.

The blood-stained corpse of the horse suddenly stood up, causing the overturned carriage to shift slightly.

Upon seeing this, Camus gave a barely perceptible nod.

Is this child from the Death pathway or the Prisoner pathway?

However, there's no cold aura or corpse-like aura…

After Lugano righted the carriage, the undead horse corpse continued pulling the five of them towards Tizamo.

Just before noon, Lumian spotted their destination.

It was a small town half-encircled by rubber trees, acacia trees, laurels, and other vegetation. Several plantations dotted the muddy road, and the air was filled with different spice scents and the alluring smell of roasted meat.

Tizamo's buildings were unique. Apart from the Eternal Blazing Sun Church cathedral, which had a distinct northern style, the rest were propped up by wooden stakes and stone pillars. They were reminiscent of West Balam—the base deliberately left empty underneath.

This was due to the humid air and abundant rainfall in many West Balam areas. Water would often overflow and pool below.

Lumian climbed down from the four-wheeled, four-seater carriage, watching the people busy with their tasks in the plantation and the town.

…

Trier, Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative, Apartment 702, 9 Rue Orosai.

Franca reclined in the recliner, rocking gently as she recollected the previous day's events.

After Jenna woke up that morning, she went out to the streets to buy meat, vegetables, fruits, and bread, making Franca wonder if she had experienced a wet dream or hallucination.

Why did she suddenly volunteer to help me with digesting the potion? Compared to most Trieriens, she can definitely be considered conservative…

Moreover, she was so direct and straightforward that I almost lost my desires out of shock. Shouldn't she flirt first to set the mood? When the time comes, even if she doesn't initiate, I won't be able to control myself… The more Franca thought about it, the more puzzled she became. She felt Jenna wouldn't normally act that way.

After recalling Jenna's past experiences and actions, she realized there was no issue.

That was precisely what Jenna would do!

Jenna has a bold nature, or rather, a personality that allows her to act decisively…

After the Showy Diva singer who helped her was raped by Margot and became unstable, she was truly willing to go to extremes to assassinate Margot and avenge her friend. To that end, she even indebted herself to me for the Assassin potion and firmly became a Beyonder despite her finances…

At the Hugues Artois banquet, she faced the Member of Parliament protected by official Beyonders and evil gods' minions. She risked everything, disregarding her own fate. She killed the bastard who brought catastrophe to the market district and

her family on the spot…

In her heart, I should still be more important than that Showy Diva friend of hers. Suddenly going to extremes and offering to help me with the potion's effects is indeed something she would do…

Besides, sigh, this definitely isn't a spur-of-the-moment idea. She has asked me several times about my progress digesting the Pleasure potion and if I have a new partner. She even recommended Lumian…

Realizing that I haven't found a new partner and that I'm only open-minded outwardly, she decided to act after being stirred by Lumian advancing to Sequence 5 yesterday…

That doesn't seem enough reason—Jenna wouldn't sacrifice her body because of just those things. Sigh, sacrifice…

Could it be that she had long realized I secretly liked her and didn't seek out a new partner because of her? Could she believe she affected my digesting the Pleasure potion, causing her to act?

Yes! That must be it. That's the only way she'd truly go to such extremes.

Ahhh! Why can't I find any hint of romantic love?

Franca wailed inwardly.

If she had known this would happen, she would have summoned her courage, toughened her resolve, and sought Lumian's help. That way, she wouldn't feel as conflicted and pained as she did now.

Of course, she didn't seek out a new intimate partner partly because she cared about Jenna's opinion.

She had become Gardner Martin's lover and shared his other lovers before meeting Jenna. There was no changing that history, so she continued on.

After Gardner Martin's demise, she had claimed she wanted Browns to experience true pleasure and participate in the Demoness's female orgies, but most of it was just talk. She was filled with anticipation only out of novelty. If Browns suddenly agreed, she might hesitate and make excuses.

She didn't want to leave an unrestrained image in Jenna or Lumian's minds.

To put it simply, her answer to the question "Is there really no one in this world you care about?" had changed, so she was hesitant to actively pursue a new intimate partner.

Jenna had no substantial intimate experience, so she didn't know how to set a mood for such situations. She could only revert to the straightforward seduction from when she was Little Minx, but she didn't want to deceive my feelings and

make me fall deeper. That's why she acted that way yesterday.

Thankfully, she's relatively level-headed. She didn't seek a lover to make me give up, allowing me to truly find a new intimate partner. Yes, she might think that would be giving me prolonged pain and not prolonged pleasure. It would have hindered my digestion of the potion… Franca felt even more dejected after piecing together the entire situation.

...

On the stairs leading to Apartment 702.

Jenna held a bag of bread and a basket of beef, vegetables, and fruits, reluctant to go back inside.

Recalling yesterday's events made her blush, unsure of how to face Franca.

In her previous days as a Showy Diva singer, she had witnessed others' affection and felt it was just so-so. Although exciting, she thought she could endure it.

Unexpectedly, after experiencing it for real, she realized pleasure could make people become consumed by it.

Phew… Jenna took a few deep breaths to calm herself.

What troubled her now was how to interact with Franca.

Wait, should I pretend nothing happened and face her with my usual demeanor? Should I be more cheerful and take the initiative to mention yesterday, pretending it's no big deal so Franca doesn't mind?

But won't this upset her? She needs to digest the Pleasure potion…

Besides, one pleasure encounter is definitely not enough. I have to spend time with her as a couple…

Should I keep seducing her tonight like yesterday, or wait for her to initiate?

Dammit, how annoying!

Jenna found such matters more vexing than assassinating powerful figures. Whether avenging herself on Margot or killing Hugues Artois, she had always felt death was the worst outcome—no big deal. However, this situation clearly hadn't reached life-or-death stakes. The subsequent troubles would linger.

Jenna couldn't help but feel frustrated at the thought of maintaining an intimate physical relationship with Franca and all the complexities involved. She wished she could simply assassinate the Minister of Industry, Moran Avigny, instead.

Taking deep breaths to steady her emotions, Jenna analyzed how to approach this from an actress's perspective to make Franca more accepting of future intimacies.

She had already taken the first bold step. She definitely wasn't willing to give up now. She planned to continue their relationship until Franca finished digesting the Pleasure potion's effects.

After figuring out her next move, Jenna's lips curled into a faint smile.

Carrying bread and ingredients, she briskly climbed the stairs and returned to Apartment 702.

As soon as she opened the door, Franca jumped up from the recliner instinctively and forced a smile. She said nervously, "You're back?"

Amused by Franca's actions, Jenna chuckled and sighed inwardly.

How great would it be if you didn't want to become lovers…

Jenna calmly walked to the dining table and placed her items on it. Then, she glared at Franca.

"What are you waiting for? Help me!"

"Alright, alright." Franca hurried over.

Seeing that Jenna wasn't reserved or distant, nor reverted to her usual demeanor, she felt an inexplicable relief. She even began to anticipate the night's arrival.

…

Sizzle. Sizzle.

The juices from a piece of beef dripped onto the fire, transforming into smoke that swirled upwards, blending with the aroma of spices. This caused Ludwig to swallow a few mouthfuls of saliva.

However, the boy patiently waited, not rushing the cook until the beef roasted to its optimal state.

Lumian turned his body and gazed at a three-story building diagonally across from the restaurant.

The yellowish-brown house was the former residence rebuilt by Hisoka Twanaku.

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Chapter 661 "Reconnaissance Tools"

During lunch, Lumian used the excuse of going to the washroom to make his way to Hisoka Twanaku's tawny house.

After ascending the wooden stairs and passing through the empty, open ground floor, he took out a new wire and picked the lock on the door.

This level was completely open-air, leaving only support pillars. At a glance, it was very spacious and simple.

Stepping onto the wooden floor, Lumian circled around but found signs that no one had lived here for a long time. He found nothing worth further investigating.

Suddenly, a voice came from behind him.

"What's the problem here?"

The voice belonged to Camus Castiya. When he saw Lumian enter Twanaku's rebuilt house from the dining room window, he found an excuse to leave the table and hurry over.

Lumian wasn't surprised at all. He looked around and said, "Nothing."

As he spoke, he ascended the stairs to the third floor.

Camus sighed silently and followed.

He felt his mentality had aged considerably when with Louis Berry, resembling someone Vice-Captain Reaza's age.

Oh, Mother Earth, I'm not even twenty-four years old!

Although I arrived in Matani at eighteen and joined the patrol team, dealing with numerous Beyonder incidents, participating in dangerous battles, and accumulating extensive experience, I am still a young man—a laidback young man who doesn't focus on appearances in daily life!

With a solemn, vigilant mindset, Camus followed Lumian through the third-floor rooms twice, searching through all the items.

"There's nothing out of place." After setting down a pen holder, Camus shared his assessment with Lumian.

Lumian hadn't gained anything either.

After a moment's contemplation, he responded, "Bring Kolobo here later and ask if there are any areas that make him uneasy, dangerous, or uncomfortable."

Having only collaborated once, he's already adept at utilizing Kolobo's uniqueness… Bringing Kolobo here… Why does it feel like a police officer asking a constable to bring a canine unit… Camus criticized inwardly and nodded.

"Understood."

As Lumian surveyed his surroundings again, he thought, I'll bring Ludwig over later and ask if he detects any fragrance of special ingredients.

Returning to the dining room with Camus, Lumian indulged in the Gwadar beverage, savoring the rich and intricate aroma of roasted beef, roasted chicken wings, roasted snake meat, roasted spiders, and roasted leeches…

After eating and drinking his fill, Lumian took Ludwig's hand and led him to "Hisoka" Twanaku's house. Camus, Lugano, and Kolobo—who wore sunglasses and walked sideways like a crab—followed closely behind.

After exploring every nook and cranny, Lumian looked at Ludwig and asked with a smile, "Is there anything edible here?"

Ludwig shook his head. "No."

Lumian led the boy down to the second level and looked at Kolobo, who had suddenly turned his back to them, and Camus.

"Do any of you sense anything unusual?"

The thin Kolobo hesitated for a moment and said, "This house feels a little cold. It doesn't sit well with me."

"Where exactly?" Lumian inquired with a calm expression.

Kolobo replied succinctly, "Everywhere."

There's something wrong with the entire house and even this land? Hisoka definitely didn't rebuild his previous home for nostalgia. He's not the original owner of that body, so he probably doesn't have much attachment to this place. He's also a true Coldblooded… Lumian pondered for over ten seconds and said to Lugano, Camus, and the others, "Stay here and guard against any mishaps."

He returned to the third floor and lay on a wooden bed with traces of someone having slept in it.

Large, black mosquitoes flew over with crackling sounds. However, in the flickering sparks, they were ignited one by one, turning into charred corpses that floated onto the bed.

Lumian quickly slipped into a deep slumber.

In his daze, he slowly awoke.

Pa! Lumian took out the golden pocket watch from Salle de Bal Brisé, opened it, and muttered to himself, "Slept for half an hour and didn't have any special dreams…"

He had always believed the Dream Festival was related to dreams, so he deliberately slept in Hisoka's house, but nothing happened.

Lumian gazed at the midday sun shining through the window and stood up thoughtfully.

Could the timing be off?

Must I sleep at a specific time and place to participate in the Dream Festival?

Therefore, most Tizamo Town residents are unaware of its existence…

When Lumian returned to the spacious but crude second level, he realized Camus and the others now had three more people with them.

One was a man in his thirties with a painted face. His light brown skin and thick lips gave him a relatively clean-cut look, and his black hair fell to his shoulders. A strong pungent smell wafted from him. The other was a young woman wearing dark leather armor. Her brown hair was tied in two strands draped over her shoulders. Her light brown skin and facial features exuded a wild beauty. She carried a hunting bow and a leather quiver of arrows on her back.

Another man, dressed similarly to Camus and the others in a shirt and thin pants, stood over 1.9 meters tall with an appearance leaning towards the Feysac Empire. He had short light-blond hair, light-blue eyes, and a face bearing signs of exposure to sun and rain.

"They're our colleagues, members of the Tizamo Town patrol team," Camus introduced.

He pointed at the man with the white paint pattern on his face and said, "Captain of the local patrol team, Maslow.

"His teammate…"

Camus turned to the wild-looking woman with a bow and arrows on her back and the tall Feysacian man and said, "Rhea.

"Loban, used to be an adventurer."

He spoke in Intisian the entire time.

Finally, Camus addressed the three local patrol team members, "This is the great adventurer, Louis Berry. The other two are his assistant and godson."

"This is the great adventurer, Louis Berry.

"The other two are his assistant and godson."

"Great adventurer…" Maslow repeated the term and cast his gaze at Loban.

Feysacian Loban shook his head, indicating he had never heard of him.

Maslow averted his gaze and asked Lumian, "Are you here to hunt?"

Tizamo Town had been a favorite hunting ground for Port Pylos's gentry for decades. There was no shortage of residents proficient in Intisian, and the patrol team had language requirements to handle the gentry's requests.

Lumian responded with a smile, "Something like that."

Hunting for Hisoka's inheritance and hidden issues was also a form of hunting.

Seeing the skeptical expressions on Maslow and the others' faces, Camus hurriedly explained, "Do you remember the telegram sent last night?"

"You mean…" With her hunting bow and arrows, Rhea couldn't help but glance at Lumian again.

Clearly, she, Maslow, and company had just arrived and hadn't had time to discuss the detailed situation with Camus and Kolobo. A telegram could only convey limited information.

Camus nodded solemnly.

"Monsieur Louis Berry is here to investigate the hidden issues behind Twanaku."

Using the excuse of inspecting the house again, he led the three local patrol team members upstairs.

Lugano glanced at the stairs and asked Kolobo, who had his back to them, "There's a local patrol team in Tizamo?"

Based on his experience, there shouldn't be any official Beyonder teams permanently stationed in the Northern Continent's small towns and villages like Port Pylos. They would typically send someone to handle issues as they arose.

Kolobo turned his back to Lumian and Ludwig, trembling as he replied, "Most other towns don't have them. This place is rather special and is often attacked by primitive tribes. Not only did our patrol team station a permanent team here, but the Admiral Guard also has Beyonders at the military camp outside town."

Lugano glanced at the strange official Beyonder who doubled as their carriage driver and couldn't hide his curiosity.

"Why do you always have your back to us and wear black sunglasses?"

Don't you want others to discover something's wrong with your eyes?"

Kolobo fell silent, unsure if he should answer.

At that moment, Camus led Maslow and the others back to the second floor.

When they looked at Lumian again, Maslow, Rhea, and Loban's expressions turned much more serious.

Lumian smiled and asked casually, "Did anything unusual happen with this house?"

"No," Maslow had already recalled the relevant details.

With a nod, Lumian replied, "Were you transferred to Tizamo after the attack last year?"

He recalled the dossier had mentioned the three Beyonders stationed here perished in the primitive tribe's attack.

"Yes," Loban, the former Feysacian adventurer, replied in a rough voice. "It's been nearly a year. It's been very peaceful here. No more attacks."

According to the records, the tribe in the primitive forest attacked two to three times a year in past years… Admiral Querarill's response of sending more guards and army deterred the primitive tribe from taking the risk. Did they really retreat into the forest depths? Or did the April Fool's prank cause something to change? Lumian sensed something amiss.

After conversing for a while, Lumian prepared to take Ludwig and Lugano to check into the motel.

Maslow took a few steps forward and retrieved two items from a small leather bag hanging from his waist.

There were brown candles and a glass bottle filled with a light-yellow liquid.

"Mosquito repellent candles and tranquil essential oil. I hope you get a good night's sleep," Maslow said in accented Intisian.

Camus chimed in, "What he means is that this place is close to the primitive forest, and mosquitoes and poisonous insects are everywhere. Although you're Beyonders, it won't be pleasant if you're accidentally bitten. Furthermore, you won't be able to sleep peacefully and will keep waking up."

"The mosquito repellent candles are made from plants that mosquitoes dislike. Tranquil essential oil comes from certain animals, making those damned buzzing fellows stay away from you."

At this point, Camus, Maslow, Rhea, and the others suddenly realized there were no mosquitoes on the entire second level.

Lumian turned to Ludwig and accepted the candle and oil with a smile.

Then, he gently pinched his nose to confirm the pungent smell on Maslow and the others came from the tranquil essential oil.

After Lumian, Ludwig, and Lugano left Twanaku's house, Maslow looked at Kolobo, who had his back to everyone, in confusion. He asked in Dutanese, "What's wrong?"

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Chapter 662 Those Words

Kolobo finally turned around.

He took off his sunglasses and spoke in Dutanese with a weary look, "My gut tells me I shouldn't look directly at them. I can only take a quick glance at most."

"Why's that?" Rhea asked curiously, her wildness evident as she carried her hunting bow.

"Just intuition," Kolobo replied firmly, unsure of the reason but convinced he shouldn't stare.

Loban, the Feysacian, wore a pensive expression.

"What's on your mind?" Maslow, his face painted white, turned to him and asked.

The three had worked together in Tizamo Town for a year and understood each other well. Maslow could tell Loban had thought of something from his look.

Observing Camus and the others' gazes, Loban pondered for a moment before saying, "While adventuring across the Five Seas, I came across this saying: 'Don't look directly at God.'"

"Don't look directly at God…" Camus's forehead twitched as he whispered the phrase.

As a Castiya family descendant, albeit from a collateral branch, he had more extensive mystical knowledge than most Beyonders.

Could it be that Louis Berry and his godson were actual gods, unable to be gazed upon?

No, that couldn't be right. Kolobo avoided looking at Twanaku directly, yet Twanaku was merely a Sequence 5 Beyonder of the Prisoner and Criminal pathways—not even a demigod!

"I've heard that before during the padre's sermons. It's about respecting and worshiping God, right?" said Rhea, a devout Eternal Blazing Sun believer.

"No, it's not from the Church scriptures. It's recorded in a mystical text," Loban shook his head, rejecting her explanation.

Maslow let out a deep chuckle.

"Surely the great adventurer can't literally be a deity walking among us?"

"Maybe not a true deity," Loban recalled, "But the book's notes state it refers to a 'Mythical Creature'. I'm unsure what exactly that means, but if it contains the word 'god', it must have at least some level of godhood. Could that adventurer be a demigod?"

"It doesn't seem that way currently," Camus said, gradually forming a new idea. "Perhaps the adventurer is simply one of a deity's Blessed, carrying a divine item or aura bestowed upon him. So it's true we can't directly look at 'God', but that 'God' isn't referring to him, only something he possesses."

This could explain the situation with Twanaku very well.

"You mean like the most famous adventurer?" Loban the Feysacian realized.

Adventurers, treasure hunters, pirates and merchants across the Five Seas now knew Gehrman Sparrow had been The Fool's Oracle before becoming an Angel.

"Precisely." Camus nodded.

Simultaneously, he inwardly cursed.

Dogsh*t, why was I sent to watch over matters involving a deity's Blessed?

This was undoubtedly perilous. A moment of carelessness could lead to death!

Camus hadn't wanted to accept Vice-Captain Reaza's order the day before, but over the past five years, Reaza had saved him from the brink of death three times. He couldn't refuse.

Otherwise, with the prestigious "Don" prefix and Castiya family name, he could have declined his superior's orders. At worst, he could leave the patrol team and seek opportunities elsewhere. After all, he had already digested the Sequence 7 Interrogator potion. He had saved enough funds for his subsequent advancement thanks to Louis Berry's two commissions. Even returning to his family, he wouldn't be the type brushed aside.

But to repay Reaza's kindness, Camus reluctantly agreed to come to Tizamo Town and monitor Louis Berry's every move. Feeling upset, he couldn't help but inwardly curse.

As a devout and educated believer in Mother Earth, Camus wouldn't curse with vulgar phrases like "son of a…" From his view, mothers were great—birth and nurturing equally important, just as the earth nurtured all things' growth.

After discussing the adventurer Louis Berry, Loban the Feysacian turned to Camus and Kolobo, saying, "When we transferred to Tizamo, we were told we could return after a year, that we wouldn't stay forever. Now, nearly a year has passed, and you're here too. Does that mean we can return to Port Pylos?"

As a Feysacian, you appear tall, robust, boorish, and unintelligent, but you're actually dishonest… Did you discover that Louis Berry's matter might be a huge problem and want an excuse to slip away early? Camus acutely sensed Loban's hidden thoughts and joked, "There's still a week left! Don't even think about returning to Port Pylos early. We're not here for your rotation."

…

At the Brieu Motel.

This was the favorite accommodation for the gentlemen who came to Tizamo Town to hunt. Although it couldn't compare to Hotel Orella, it was at least relatively clean.

Lumian's sole reason for choosing this place was the availability of a suite.

Otherwise, he would have to rent two adjacent rooms and utilize his Hunter's precise grasp of structures to blast through the adjoining wall without affecting the overall load-bearing walls. When departing, he'd get Lugano to replace the stone bricks and repair the opening.

The ground floor was equally open, supported by stone pillars. However, the three-story building above bore a distinct Intisian flair. The beige walls, recessed statuary niches, arched windows, and venetian curtains made Lumian feel as if he had returned to Trier.

When Lugano lit the mosquito repellent candle and used its slightly pungent smell to chase away the poisonous insects and mosquitoes, it became even more reminiscent.

This is very similar to Trieriens using sulfur's smell to repel bedbugs… Lumian recalled his initial arrival in Trier.

After using sulfur's smell to chase the bedbugs into the neighboring room, playwright Gabriel ignited it and drove them back. After this back-and-forth, most bedbugs went elsewhere, leaving only a few that the doll messenger eliminated.

Lumian sighed silently, recalling Gabriel's death and the deceased tenants of the Auberge du Coq Doré.

He walked to the window and gazed at the street below.

The gentlemen in hunting attire and their servants on unicorns weaved through the dark-brown or light-brown townspeople, flowing into Brieu Motel, jungle restaurants, and other establishments like rivers.

Under the noon sun, Tizamo Town was scorchingly humid this season, making it unsuitable for outdoor activities.

On the second floor, Lumian focused his attention and observed the passersby directly below.

He attempted to discern any potential issues with Tizamo Town from their fortunes.

He was prepared for backlash or corruption.

These passersby's fortunes are normal. Some seem to have romantic encounters looming, some would lose money, and some might encounter a bloody calamity, but nothing too serious…

Lumian averted his gaze and said to Lugano, "Take Ludwig to rest. I'll take a walk outside."

"Alright." Knowing the trip to Tizamo Town might be dangerous, Lugano had no intention of wandering out unless his boss asked him to prepare food for Ludwig.

He had no choice but to go along. Otherwise, he would be the one eaten!

Tizamo Town wasn't small with streets spanning out in two directions. Lumian strolled leisurely, hands in pockets, donning a golden straw hat.

He no longer wore the straw hat to enhance Louis Berry's persona, but to shield himself from the sunlight. He had intended to do so many times before.

This was because an adverse effect of Shadow Transformation was a greater fear of sunlight than ordinary people.

Although Lumian could endure relying on his Ascetic abilities, this would impact his condition to some extent. Why make things difficult when he could resolve it with a straw hat?

Moreover, with the appearance of Louis Berry wearing a golden straw hat, the enemy wouldn't think he was afraid of sunlight.

As his gaze casually shifted, Lumian spotted a girl.

She was a typical Northern Continent native, her black hair cascading down her back like a waterfall, a few sparkling bows adorning her head. Her azure-tinged eyes accentuated her sharp, delicate nose. An unmistakable youthful aura radiated between her brows.

The girl wore a light, lace-trimmed, pleated white dress, but instead of high heels, she donned a pair of brown leather boots. As she conversed and laughed with companions, she danced, seemingly unconcerned about passersby's opinions.

Lumian glanced at her again.

It wasn't because she was beautiful. Although quite lovely, her appearance and bearing couldn't compare to a Demoness or truly beautiful humans.

Lumian simply sensed her personality differed from Trier's ladies.

In Trier, no matter how open-minded respectable middle and upper-class women were in private, they still publicly cared about image and others' opinions—a product of their upbringing.

This girl exuded an air of freedom. She could laugh loudly or spin around whenever she pleased.

This was distinct from an improperly raised lower-class woman's demeanor. This girl's attire, speech and aura indicated good education and upbringing.

"Amandina, daughter of Palms Manor's Sir Petit, and Monsieur Robert's fiancée," Camus, resembling a specter, materialized from nowhere beside Lumian with the introduction.

Palms Manor was a plantation near Tizamo Town.

A Southern Continent girl raised without Trier's upper-

middle-class societal constraints… As Lumian judged this, he thought of his sister Aurore.

Sometimes, Aurore displayed such a side.

However, the reasons were clearly different.

"Where are you headed?" Camus inquired.

Lumian retracted his gaze and replied with a smile, "The cathedral.

"Are you coming with me to praise the Sun?"

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Chapter 663 Late Night

Like many cathedrals in Intis, Tizamo's had a golden dome, resembling the sun's reflection on the ground.

As Lumian passed through the door, he was dazzled by the walls, arches, gold leaf inlaid in the dome, a mural sprinkled with golden powder, and a golden statue. The sunlight streaming through the glass behind the altar made him instinctively raise his hand, wanting to press down his golden straw hat.

It was lunchtime, and many simply-dressed Tizamo residents sat in various pews, heads bowed in prayer.

They didn't mind the cathedral's dazzling, extravagant appearance at all.

This was not only because they had always believed in the Eternal Blazing Sun since childhood, but they also had numerous gold mines in the former Balam Empire. The people had a widespread fondness for gold, a hobby preserved to this day.

Lumian shared an affinity for gold, but didn't want to endure the scorching sunlight.

Beside him, Camus tried explaining, "I'm not monitoring you, nor am I saying I'll follow you everywhere to prevent accidents.

"I'm assisting you. You're still unfamiliar with Dutanese. You lack sufficient understanding of the situation in Tizamo and the people here. I can introduce you."

Lumian seized the opportunity to turn and ask with a smile, "Do you know it well?"

Camus ruffled his disheveled brown hair and replied without embarrassment, "If there's anything I don't understand, I can ask Maslow and the others to help."

Lumian didn't mind having an official Beyonder by his side. If anything happened, he could use the extra muscle.

He nodded slightly and said, "If you want to follow, go ahead."

As Lumian spoke, he walked towards the row of seats in front of the altar under the blazing sunlight.

Camus hesitated for a few seconds before finding a seat in the farthest corner of the cathedral.

As a believer of Earth Mother, he could freely enter and exit the cathedrals of all orthodox gods, but he couldn't participate in acts of worship.

He only knew that Louis Berry had a close connection to the Church of The Fool, but he wasn't sure if his faith was with The Fool.

Lumian used his Ascetic endurance to control the twitching of his facial muscles. He sat down under the sunlight as if nothing happened and lowered his head to pray in front of the preaching padre.

The padre, a native of Port Pylos named Cali, had standard dark brown skin, sunken eyes, and a chiseled face. He only had a thin layer of black hair, not wearing a clergyman's hat.

In his forties with a solemn expression, he preached in unaccented Intisian.

Lumian, feigning prayer, found himself distracted. Thoughts raced through his mind, making him feel as if he had returned to Cordu. Back then, even when attending Mass and praying in the cathedral, he was lost in his own thoughts. When it was almost over, he quickly praised the Sun and wished his sister would always be healthy and that he wouldn't need much homework or test prep to get into university.

None of that came true.

After the padre finished preaching, Lumian raised his head and narrowed his eyes in the sunlight, focusing on observing the padre's fortune.

There was nothing special about it.

On the surface, there's indeed nothing abnormal about Tizamo… Amidst sunburn-like pain, Lumian planned to avert his gaze, but his heart stirred as he activated his Reaper's Weakness Investigation ability.

He thought of Padre Guillaume Bénet and Father Montserrat of the Church of Earth Mother.

Who said clergymen from orthodox Churches wouldn't be problematic?

In that case, he could observe the padre's weaknesses in advance. If he truly encountered clerical depravity in the future, he could quickly resolve it.

Various colors appeared on the padre's body in Lumian's eyes.

However, there was no pale-white among them!

This meant the padre had no weaknesses!

Impossible. Even if this padre is a Beyonder, his Sequence shouldn't be too high. How can he have no weaknesses? The Sun pathway isn't known for toughness and

imperviousness… Could he be from another pathway? No, all likely have weaknesses… Amidst surprise, Lumian observed more closely.

Finally, he noticed a faint pallor.

It wasn't on the padre's body, but in the depths of his Astral Projection.

Does this mean his weakness lies in his spirit, fearing attacks targeting his Spirit Body? How did he manage to have no bodily weaknesses… From the looks of it, I have to dismantle his body piece by piece to kill him if I'm not targeting his Spirit Body… Lumian's surprise quickly dissipated, replaced by joy and anticipation.

Regardless, discovering any abnormalities was a good thing!

This meant he was a step closer to the problem in Tizamo and the Dream Festival Hisoka had mentioned.

"Brother, what are you looking at?" Cali asked Lumian with a smile, clutching a Bible.

Lumian responded with a smile, "Looking at the sunlight on you.

"Praise the Sun!"

With that, Lumian stood up, spread his arms slightly, and turned to leave.

Now was not the time to delve into the abnormality in the padre's body.

Padre Cali was delighted by Lumian's response.

Firstly, the other party was subtly praising him for being bathed in sunlight, akin to a deity's blessings. Secondly, as a local clergyman without Northern blood, he had always yearned for Northern gentry's recognition.

After leaving the Saint-Sien Cathedral, Lumian casually had Camus circle the entirety of Tizamo twice with him, including the military camp, plantation, and the outskirts of the primitive forest.

Camus eagerly introduced everyone he knew.

As evening approached, Lumian made his way towards the Brieu Motel and asked, "What did you do with that dead horse?"

"I sold it to the butcher. I'm planning to buy a new one from a nearby planter," Camus replied matter-of-factly.

Lumian felt a twinge of disappointment for Ludwig. He remained silent and entered the motel.

Late at night.

In the shadows outside the Brieu Motel, Lumian emerged, no longer wearing his golden straw hat. He strolled towards the yellowish-brown house that "Hisoka" Twanaku had rebuilt.

It was nearly midnight, and Tizamo had grown very quiet. Apart from a few patrolling soldiers, drunk patrons, and their companions, no one else was walking outside.

Under the crimson moonlight, Lumian passed by the bar named Giant Boa and heard a commotion inside.

In the primitive forest a few hundred meters away, the howls of wild beasts echoed intermittently.

Lumian proceeded until he reached his destination. He ascended to the third level and found the wooden bed he had slept on earlier.

He busied himself for a while, making preparations. He wasn't in a hurry to lie down. He looked around and muttered to himself thoughtfully, "Termiboros, have you noticed anything unusual here?"

Termiboros's majestic voice reverberated within Lumian's body.

"I'm using your eyes, ears, nose, spirituality, and fate to observe the outside world —just slightly more than what you see."

Does this mean that what I see and discover will still be restricted by my body, spirituality, and level? Hold on, this fellow is becoming more and more like a riddler. He didn't directly answer if there's anything abnormal about this house or what's abnormal… Lumian scoffed.

"Are you truly an Angel of the Fate domain? I'm already a Sequence 5, and you can't use my eyes and spirituality to detect the problem here. Haven't you noticed that a Sequence 8 of the Monster pathway can sense that this place is cold?

"No way. Are Angels of the Inevitability pathway inferior to Sequence 8s of the Fate pathway?"

The Monster pathway was also known as the Fate pathway.

Lumian provoked Termiboros to see if he could extract any useful information from this Angel-level Ascetic.

He didn't hold out much hope, but at least he wouldn't lose anything.

Termiboros fell silent, as if He had vanished from Lumian's body.

"How tolerant. As expected of an Ascetic Angel," Lumian mocked. He took out the golden pocket watch he had obtained from Salle de Bal Brise and flipped it open to confirm the current time.

11:51 p.m.

Putting away his pocket watch, Lumian lay on the wooden bed in the room.

This time, he was here to see if sleeping in the house at night would trigger any abnormalities and if he could enter a special dream to participate in the Dream Festival.

To this end, Lumian had instructed Ludwig in advance to wake him up in the house rebuilt by Twanaku if he wasn't back by the time they had their second meal.

After Lumian promised there would be a feast the next day, Ludwig agreed.

With crackling sounds, the menacing spiders crawling on the outer walls of the house and the numerous mosquitoes in the room burned and fell, emitting a charred fragrance.

Relying on Cogitation, Lumian swiftly drifted into a deep slumber.

In a daze, he slowly woke up. He straightened up and realized that he was still on the wooden bed, in the master bedroom on the third floor of Hisoka's house.

It was late at night outside the window, and the crimson moonlight seemed to be obscured by clouds. Only a small amount of light filtered through, making it abnormally dim.

The howling of wild beasts in the primitive forest and the faint noise from the bar had completely ceased. The night had entered its most peaceful state, as silent as death.

There's no change… Lumian sighed in disappointment.

Just as he was about to take out his golden pocket watch to confirm the time and leave the house in the dark environment to return to the Brieu Motel, his pupils suddenly dilated and his eyes froze.

Under the dim crimson moonlight, Lumian swiftly scanned the room's floor.

He didn't see mosquito corpses!

The mosquitoes he had incinerated with his Pyromaniac powers before falling asleep should have been charred on the ground, but now, they were nowhere to be found. The floor was clean as if it had just been cleaned!

Could it be that someone came in while I was asleep and cleaned the room? I've planted several traps around me. They can't be easily bypassed… Wraith? Lumian instantly tensed up. He took out the golden pocket watch he had previously kept in his shirt pocket under his vest and flipped it open to check the time.

11:58 p.m.

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Chapter 664 Confirming the Boundary

?11:58?

Lumian's gaze fixated on the golden pocket watch, his suspicions heightened by the peculiar scent in the air.

He felt as though he had slumbered for more than an hour. Why then had only seven minutes elapsed?

Though the unreliability of his instincts were plausible, other anomalies lurked. The absence of mosquito corpses and the eerie silence hinted at peculiarities.

Lumian, drawing from his past encounters, murmured to himself, Could it be that I've entered a special dream?

In the dead of night, slumbering within this tawny house leads to a peculiar dream?

Did "Hisoka" Twanaku rebuild the house to make it look less suspicious for him to stay there?

But why would such a thing happen?

Lumian bowed his head and peered ahead. His gaze seemed to penetrate through wooden planks and various obstacles, revealing the corresponding underground area.

Uncertain about the origin of this anomaly, he could only speculate based on common sense and experience.

In the silent darkness, Lumian shuffled his feet, producing creaking sounds as he left the house that once belonged to "Hisoka" Twanaku.

The street lay deserted, and many of the livestock on the ground floor of the buildings seemed to blend into the night. It was impossible to discern if they still existed. The footsteps of patrolling soldiers had vanished completely.

A warm, humid night breeze swept through the unobstructed streets, surrounding Lumian as he headed towards the entrance of the Giant Boa bar.

Straining his ears, Lumian noticed that it was so quiet that even the rustling of insects and the buzzing of mosquitoes had ceased.

His expression remained unchanged as he extended his right hand, pushing open the heavy wooden door.

Darkness shrouded the interior. With the dim moonlight filtering through the window and Lumian's sharp eyesight as a Hunter, he could barely discern the outlines of the bar counter, liquor cabinet, small round table, chairs, candlestick wall lamps, and other items, but not a single human was in sight.

The bar seemed to have been closed for quite some time.

This is even more perplexing. Before I fell asleep, this bar was quite lively. It's impossible for them to clear out the customers and clean every corner in seven to eight minutes.

Based on my experience, even though countryside bars close earlier than those in the city and aren't bustling until two or three in the morning, they usually continue selling alcohol until midnight. Also, they usually ask those who are still drinking to leave after they're done. If they encounter a drunk who refuses to leave, it tends to cause some delay… Lumian, a regular at Cordu's Ol' Tavern, felt confident in making such judgments, drawing from his various experiences in different bars.

This conviction only strengthened his belief that he was caught in what seemed to be a very real dream.

Suddenly, memories of past events in Cordu flooded Lumian's mind, causing his grip on the heavy wooden door of the Giant Boa bar to freeze.

After a moment of contemplation, he decided to leave and headed back to the Brieu Motel.

Walking through the dark stairs and a corridor paved with aged planks, Lumian returned to his suite on the second floor at a moderate pace. He pushed open the wooden door to the child's room.

The dim crimson moonlight poured into the room, illuminating the sky-blue patterned blanket and bedsheets.

But no one was sleeping here.

Ludwig had disappeared too.

Combined with the strange sights on his way, Lumian strongly suspected that he was alone in this dream.

All the townsfolk, livestock, and outsiders had vanished, leaving him in solitude in Tizamo Town!

This can't be considered a festival unless it is named the Loneliness Festival… Lumian pondered for a few seconds before leaving the Brieu Motel and heading towards the Saint-Sien Cathedral near the cemetery.

In the dim moonlit night, the cathedral's golden dome and various decorations on the outer walls seemed to lose their glow, settling into a deep slumber.

Lumian didn't want to waste energy pushing open the front door. He pried open a stained glass window and jumped in.

In the night's darkness, the place was silent and empty. The dome above exuded an oppressive and cold aura that was absent during the day.

Lumian searched the area but couldn't find Padre Cali— who had exhibited abnormalities—the deputy padre, or any odd-job workers.

I'm truly alone…

Only those who sleep in Hisoka's house can enter this special dream?

Yes, and it has to be late at night.

How can the Dream Festival be held? One can't expect all the relevant people to line up at Hisoka's house to sleep at a specific time, right? Disregarding the question of whether we can squeeze in, how did such a widespread collective act deceive the patrol team and the army outside the town?

Moreover, it doesn't seem like everyone has been pulled into the dream. The Tizamons I previously found were completely unaware…

And the most crucial question: Since it's a dream, why am I lucid?

Lumian contemplated for a moment before reaching out his right hand to touch the wall adorned with the religious mural.

It felt cold and solid, a genuine stone.

Drawing on his extensive experience in realistic dreams, Lumian pushed aside these questions, opting to begin with the simplest reconnaissance.

He aimed to confirm the dimensions of this dream and its boundaries.

Activating the black mark on his right shoulder, Lumian connected with the spirit world. He "saw" every corner of Tizamo Town.

Through Spirit World Traversal, he disappeared and reappeared on the packed earth path leading from Tizamo Town to Port Pylos.

Teleportation is possible… That's true. Since it's a dream, nothing is impossible. As long as I believe it's feasible, I should be able to do it… Following the Cordu incident, Lumian delved into numerous dream-related books and sought counsel from Madam Justice, Madam Susie, Anthony Reid, and other Beyonders in the mind domain, gaining a profound understanding.

Slowing his pace, he headed towards Port Pylos. After walking for two to three hundred meters, the scenery ahead blurred, as if an ethereal fog was swirling. Beneath the faint moonlight, the fog appeared pitch-black.

Suddenly, Lumian's spiritual intuition warned him that entering the misty area, veiled in an illusionary fog, might be perilous. There was a high likelihood that something terrifying would occur.

There are indeed limitations. I can't directly reach the edge of the mind… Lumian decided against taking the risk. He swiftly returned to Tizamo and began searching for the other boundary.

This was the area near the primitive forest.

After covering a distance of 300 to 400 meters, Lumian reached the forest's edge. Rainforest-like vegetation stood silently in the night, resembling dense tombstones.

Noticing no blurry areas veiled in illusory fog, Lumian proceeded cautiously and decisively.

Passing through drooping vines and trees, he delved deeper into the primitive forest, walking on the thick, humus-covered ground.

Along the way, there were no dancing mosquitoes or venomous creatures concealed among the vegetation.

After another 700 to 800 meters, Lumian sensed his surroundings becoming more psychedelic.

Some areas became blurry, others distorted, and some became clearer. However, upon closer inspection, they couldn't be seen distinctly.

The conditions in these areas continued to fluctuate.

This feels more like a typical dream… With no warning from his spirituality, Lumian took a few more steps forward.

Suddenly, the entire world shattered into scenes that interweaved and materialized around him.

Lumian's lucidity wavered, leaving him slightly disoriented.

In the next moment, he witnessed scenes of black boulders and humans in dark robes.

One of the humans raised his head, revealing a pale-white face with a light brown base, flaxen-colored eyes tinged with dark green, and decent facial features.

Hisoka!

"Hisoka" Twanaku!

He was "Hisoka" Twanaku!

The human in the dark robe, embodying "Hisoka" Twanaku's visage, straightened up.

His gaze seemed to transcend various scenes and fixate on Lumian.

Amidst the illusory sound, the scenes around Lumian shattered.

Lumian sat up and found himself back in the tawny building that "Hisoka" Twanaku had rebuilt. He was in the dark room with the simple wooden bed.

Quickly surveying his surroundings, Lumian retrieved a golden pocket watch from the left breast pocket of his shirt. Clicking it open, he checked the time.

1:38 a.m.

The crimson moonlight outside the window wasn't too bright, but it wasn't dim either. The nearby Giant Boa bar had already closed, yet the howl of a wild beast echoed from the distant primitive forest.

The night was silent but not deathly still.

I'm awake? That's more like it. I slept for an hour or more than 40 minutes, quite close to my estimation… Lumian got out of bed and observed the ground. As expected, he saw charred mosquito corpses and numerous insects lingering outside the window, blocked by the smell of tranquil essential oil.

Phew. He breathed a sigh of relief and contemplated the appearance of "Hisoka" Twanaku in the special dream.

Since it's a festival, Dream Festival shouldn't be held just once—that's what a party is. Could Hisoka have participated in many Dream Festivals in the past few years and left some kind of mark in the dream?

Is Dream Festival indeed related to that primitive tribe? That's why I activated certain imprints and images recorded in the dream after venturing deep into the forest. That's how I saw Hisoka…

What purpose does Hisoka intend to achieve with the Dream Festival?

Dream Festival, Dream Festival. Since it's a festival, it must be held on a fixed date. At other times, if I enter a special dream, I won't encounter anything, just like me tonight?

What date could it be?

Lumian fell into deep thought.

He quickly deduced a direction.

On December 17th of last year, the primitive tribe attacked Tizamo Town, causing numerous casualties.

Lumian perked up and swiftly confirmed today's date. Dream Festival happens on December 17th, or two or three days before it, which is when April Fool's played their prank here?

It was past 1 a.m. on December 11th.

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Chapter 665 Clues

If the Dream Festival has a fixed date, as I suspect, it should be one of the coming days or span a few days…

Recently, I came to Hisoka's house every night to sleep, trying not to miss the Dream Festival. I also need to figure out the basic patterns of the special dream as much as possible before it begins. For example, how to leave the dream normally without entering the primitive forest…

Lumian closed the golden pocket watch and slipped it into the breast pocket of his shirt, concealed by his vest.

He didn't continue sleeping there. Instead, he chose to descend the stairs and enter the streets of Tizamo. First, Ludwig would have his second supper in twenty minutes. According to their agreement, if Lumian didn't return in time, Ludwig would come over and forcefully wake him up. Second, he had to update Madam Magician on his discoveries.

Just as Lumian stepped out of Hisoka's house, a voice suddenly sounded from behind.

"What exactly are you investigating?"

In a dark corner where the crimson moonlight couldn't reach, Camus Castiya emerged, dressed in a white shirt and an unbuttoned yellow vest. His disheveled hair collapsed from staying up too late.

At some point, the young leader of the Port Pylos patrol team's combat team had been waiting here.

Lumian wasn't surprised at all, as if he had sensed Camus' presence. He evaded the question and said, "Many scenes display different states during the day and at night."

"Indeed." Camus had dealt with numerous mystical incidents that matched this description. The simplest and most common situation was that certain haunted houses appeared normal under the sunlight.

As Lumian walked towards the Brieu Motel, he teased Camus with a smile, "Have you been awake the entire time, squatting in the shadows outside the motel, observing my movements?

"That's tough. Careful not to suddenly drop dead."

If Camus hadn't known that Louis Berry had a close relationship with the Church of The Fool and didn't mind him tagging along, he would have thought Lumian's teasing was a warning.

Do you think I want that? Camus laughed self-deprecatingly.

"I'll be in charge of watching tonight. It's Maslow or Rhea's turn tomorrow."

Lumian didn't engage in further conversation. As if lost in thought, he made his way back to the Brieu Motel.

Camus wanted to inquire further, but he dared not.

He then saw the adventurer stop at the motel's entrance, his back toward Camus. Lumian said calmly, "Before Twanaku died, he mentioned a term—Dream Festival.

"I've just discovered some traces in his house and confirmed that there's a special dream happening in Tizamo Town.

"Gather all the folklore related to dreams in this area and bring it to me as soon as possible."

"Uh…" Camus was at a loss at first, but then his mind cleared, as if a bucket of ice-cold water had been poured over him on a scorching summer day.

As expected, there's more to the Twanaku incident. There's indeed a huge problem lurking here! Camus wasn't too surprised, but his heart pounded.

Instinctively, he replied, "Okay."

After agreeing, Camus realized that he had unknowingly followed Lumian's instructions, as if the other man were the captain of a patrol team.

After watching Lumian enter the Brieu Motel, Camus briefly analyzed his reaction.

He felt that this situation stemmed from both the intimidation brought about by Lumian's strength and the accumulated credibility and reliability of his previous deeds.

I have to send a telegram back to Port Pylos to request reinforcements…

In addition, I need to familiarize myself with Tizamo as soon as possible and strive to move jurisdiction here within a few days…

After considering his next steps, Camus let out another sigh.

Ever since encountering Louis Berry, problems had never ceased erupting!

I initially came to Tizamo to monitor his actions and prevent any accidents. Why am I now investigating the Dream Festival?

…

Up in the suite on the second floor of the Brieu Motel, Lumian greeted Ludwig shuffling to the dining table, having just woken up. He then returned to the master bedroom.

Before pondering his letter to Madam Magician, Lumian noticed a folded square of paper on the desk.

A reply after midnight—so typical of Madam Magician, he thought with an inward chuckle. He picked up the letter and conjured a blazing white fireball above his head for light, as Tizamo lacked gas lighting.

Under the fireball's incandescent glow, Lumian unfolded and read the letter:

"I've completed my astromancy and received a revelation about the rest of the Abscessed Hand's body.

"The remaining body is divided into three parts. One part is highly suspected to be located in the Underworld, and the other two parts have hints closely related to Lenburg's capital, Azshara, but they're not actually there. This reminds me of the City of Exiles, Morora, which seals 0-01. It has a similar situation, inside Lenburg, yet not truly being in Lenburg.

"My interpretation is that the two missing body parts of the Abscessed Hand are hidden away in the City of Exiles, Morora.

"Don't you find it too coincidental?

"No, it's not a coincidence at all. My astromancy results show that nearly three months ago, one of the two body parts was still located in the tombs of the Paz Kingdom in the Southern Continent, and the other part was related to some folklore in the south-central region.

"Get my drift?"

Wh— Almost three months ago… As a Conspirer, Lumian grasped Madam Magician's implication.

Accepting the information about the most terrifying Sealed Artifact 0-01, and masquerading as Ludwig's godfather, was akin to accepting an olive branch offered from the Church of Knowledge. Lumian had promised to pay a certain price for this knowledge…

It seemed the Church of Knowledge then dispatched high-ranking individuals to gather the two remaining body parts of the Abscessed Hand and hide them away in the City of Exiles, Morora.

What does this mean? It is clearly forcing me to journey to Morora, unless I choose to abandon my hopes of advancing to Sequence 4 and achieving the state of demi-godhood.

Heh heh, my agreement with the Abscessed Hand stated that until I found its full body, I would never be able to obtain true godhood. This blocks any idea of trying to become a demigod without consuming potions by relying on boons instead…

Thankfully, Lumian wasn't resistant to the idea of visiting the City of Exiles, Morora, before becoming a demigod. At that moment, he didn't feel stifled or vexed by this necessity. Instead, he felt it would actually save him a lot of trouble.

After some thought, he continued reading the rest of the letter:

"My astromancy results also tell me that once the Abscessed Hand's full body is gathered and reunited, something extremely dangerous will happen. It's best to complete this reunion step while you're in the City of Exiles, and use the existence of 0-01 to try to counteract this incoming risk.

"In other words, you need to find and retrieve the body part located in the Underworld first.

"Yes, you should have an opportunity to enter the Underworld itself within the next three months. Remember to seize this opportunity when it arises. Don't ask me what opportunity it is exactly—I don't know the specifics either."

Opportunity to enter the Underworld within the next three months… Lumian repeated this crucial piece of information to himself.

Amidst his elation, the words struck Lumian as peculiar. "Entering the Underworld" and "going to hell" were two distinct phrases that conveyed the same meaning. In this world, barring a small number of individuals, no one could readily accept the phrase "you have a chance to go to hell within three months." It was worth noting that many people would curse at each other, saying, "I wish you a swift descent into hell."

For the moment, Lumian didn't have time to ponder the opportunity to enter the Underworld. He burned Madam Magician's reply and jotted down his gains for the night and his guesses about the Dream Festival. He planned to send it to the Major Arcana card holder at noon the following day.

Although he couldn't shake the feeling that Madam Magician's "schedule" bore a resemblance to Franca's, he wasn't sure if it was convenient to send a letter at that time.

…

Northern Continent, Trier.

Winter sunlight poured through the glass, filling the living room with warmth that chased away the chill.

Franca lounged in the recliner, basking in the cozy glow with half-lidded eyes.

Suddenly, she sensed something and sat upright, pulling her legs in.

In the shadowy corner, a human skull made of pure glowing silver emerged. Pale white flames flickered in its vacant sockets.

Madame Hela's messenger… Why is she contacting me? Franca watched, puzzled, as the skull's jaws unhinged, releasing a single page that drifted towards her.

She snatched the letter and scanned it quickly.

"007 hasn't heard from you in four days. He wants to confirm you're okay."

Four days without checking the group… A dry chuckle escaped her lips.

What does this mean?

Early to bed and late to rise keeps the king fit to rule his realm! No more morning courts!

In the early morning hours, Franca manned the radio transceiver while Jenna roamed outside, seizing her opportunity to act as a Witch.

Tap tap tap! Her first telegram in days.

"Shurima! Your emperor has returned!"

Before long, 007's telegram was tapped out by the analyzer-

powered mechanical typewriter.

"Hidden Blade, where have you been?"

Ahem. Franca cleared her throat.

"Late nights breed ill health. Have you no loved ones?"

"Don't bring up such sad topics…"

"Hidden Blade, have you mastered the assassination arts—

sundering heart and soul?"

"…"

Protests arose from the other members.

At length, 007's message arrived.

"I have the intel on the last incident. Let's meet to discuss.

"The higher-ups also approved the item swap for the story you proposed."

Franca blinked, startled.

"How long did that take? I'd forgotten all about it…"

After all, understanding that humanoid Sealed Artifact's tale was Lumian's curiosity, not hers.

007's resigned telegram:

"Bureaucracy inertia. Unavoidable for any large, established organization."

"Tell me about it!" Another member, Moon King's amused agreement clattered out. "Whether public or secret, they're all bound by red tape."

After arranging to meet 007 that night with the Moran Avigny intel and initial assassination plan, Franca rose with a stretch.

She jotted down the two tasks before performing a ritual to summon Lumian's messenger, Penitent Baynfel.

…

Southern Continent, Tizamo Town.

Lumian was just about to head to Hisoka's house for a nap when his messenger materialized from the shadows, delivering a letter.

After taking the note, Lumian noticed Penitent Baynfel didn't immediately depart back to the spirit world as usual. Instead, he lingered, surveying their surroundings with a measured gaze.

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Chapter 666 New Information

?Lumian had rarely seen Penitent Baynfel act so abnormally. He asked with anticipation and curiosity, "What have you discovered?"

Baynfel, clad in a clergyman's black robe, his charred body partially tainted by black flames, averted his gaze and replied in a deep voice, "The night conceals the flowing sin."

With that, the Penitent stepped into the void and vanished from the room.

The night conceals the flowing sin… It's emphasizing the night because that allows entry into the special dream? What does the 'flowing sin' refer to? Can't you mysterious types speak plainly? Lumian criticized, then opened Franca's letter and quickly read it.

To be honest, after such a long time, his desire to understand the humanoid Sealed Artifact's past had significantly diminished. After all, he had mainly felt the other party's state was similar to his own, triggering his emotions back then. That was why he had suggested it. Now, those emotions had long settled.

Of course, they had only settled, not disappeared. Lumian tore open the letter and jotted down the entire incident, planning to send it to Madam Magician at noon the next day.

As for whether the Major Arcana card holder would agree to such an unequal trade, Lumian wasn't too confident. However, he intuitively felt that the Tarot Club's Major Arcana holders wouldn't simply take possession of important artifacts from the orthodox Churches. Using this opportunity to make a deal was more likely.

After leaving the Brieu Motel, Lumian calmly observed Camus, donned in a yellow vest, emerge from a dimly lit street corner. Beside him was Rhea, a member of the local patrol wearing leather armor and carrying a hunting bow.

"Why two people today?" Lumian chuckled and strode towards Hisoka's house.

Camus took a deep breath to calm his sudden surge of emotions. As he followed Louis Berry's left hand, he replied in a deep voice, "There are only a few days left until the 17th. An accident might happen at any moment. We can't act alone anymore."

Having consciously gathered various information, the patrol team had already noticed some abnormalities. This made Camus feel that staying in Tizamo was unwise. He was constantly on edge.

He felt a growing sense of being a middle-aged man burdened with heavy responsibilities.

Raising an eyebrow, Lumian queried, "Hey, you figuring out the 17th is a key date was pretty fast."

"We're not fools," Camus finally couldn't help but reply. "It's an obvious issue. Last year, Tizamo was attacked on December 17th, and in previous years…"

At this point, he fell silent.

He realized that when around Louis Berry, he constantly switched between his heavy middle-aged state and uncontrollable teenage emotions.

Lumian asked with interest, "What happened in previous years?"

Camus fell silent for a few seconds before saying, "We obtained the funeral registrations for nearly three decades in Tizamo from the Saint-Sien Cathedral and discovered a peculiar phenomenon. 80% of the annual deaths are recorded within the first three months starting mid-December.

"This place isn't like many Northern Continent places. Winters are bitterly cold there. It's difficult for the elderly and weak to survive. Even if they do, it's summer from late December to late March.

"This phenomenon is abnormal."

Lumian advanced slowly and nodded slightly.

"Is the mortality rate in Tizamo higher than elsewhere?"

"Significantly higher, but that's mainly due to attacks from the primitive forest tribe. Also, we discovered the tribe's attacks concentrated in the three months beginning mid-December. There have been two to three attacks annually, and since the one on December 17th last year, not a single one has occurred. The situation doesn't seem right." Camus was a little worried a major attack would occur in the next few days.

"Heh heh, it's understandable the tribe's attacks concentrated in those first three months. Any other abnormalities?" Lumian asked casually.

Rhea, who had been silently following, responded.

The brown-skinned, brown-haired woman, exuding a wild beauty, spoke in a raspy voice,

"In the first half of this year, many women in town and the plantations experienced symptoms of nausea, soreness, bloating—pregnancy symptoms. They believed they'd been victimized by a ghost and might birth evil fetuses, but they weren't actually pregnant. Just illusions. After Padre Cali held Mass and briefly purified

them, they received psychological comfort and quickly returned to normal."

"We've also noticed similar incidents of perceived possession and attacks by evil spirits in Tizamo over the years, concentrated in that first half. It's not just pregnancy symptoms," Camus added.

Lumian halted in his tracks.

"Don't the townsfolk and the people in the surrounding plantations find it strange that mass hysteria occurs every year?"

As a member of the local patrol team, Rhea explained simply, "Everyone believes it's caused by the primitive tribe in the forest."

"Why?" Lumian resumed his nocturnal "stroll."

Rhea's vocal cords seemed damaged, and her voice was always a little hoarse.

"In the repeated attacks and conflicts, the primitive tribe displayed the ability to control corpses, ghosts, and shadows. Furthermore, some warriors seemed to continue protecting their tribe in their spirit form after their deaths."

Death domain… Heh, the entire matter seems logical on the surface. No wonder the Tizamons who left town didn't find anything amiss and didn't raise the issue… Lumian had seen records of the primitive tribe, but they weren't as specific as Rhea's description.

After inquiring about the recent information the patrol team had gathered, Lumian stopped in front of Hisoka's house and turned to glance at Rhea, who was carrying a hunting bow and arrows.

"You're from the Southern Continent, but not from Tizamo?"

Rhea nodded and calmly said, "I'm from the forest. I'm from one of the primitive tribes called Paca. We mainly live near the Paz Valley."

The rainforest of the Southern Continent spanned a vast expanse, encompassing numerous territories. From the area near the Paz Valley to the vicinity of Matani, the distance might be even greater than that between Cordu and Trier.

"Paca" meant "wind" in Dutanese.

"How did you come to Matani?" Lumian asked curiously.

Rhea let out a chuckle.

"I was sold here."

She paused for a moment before continuing, "Ten years ago, my tribe was attacked by the Loen Kingdom's army. I was captured and sold repeatedly before arriving in the Northern state. Later, I found a chance to escape and fled to Port Pylos. I

received help from the Church and found work. Eventually, I was lucky enough to become a Beyonder."

The patrol team member calmly recounted her past, not dwelling on any pain or torture from those experiences, nor deliberately avoiding details.

No wonder you believe so devoutly in the Eternal Blazing Sun… Lumian ascended the stairs to the second floor and said in an even tone,

"Did you keep using a bow instead of firearms out of habit?"

"Yes. Tribes named for the wind excel at archery." Rhea's light-

brown face softened.

Lumian glanced back at her.

"Did you ever go back to take a look?"

Rhea fell silent for a few seconds.

"They're all dead…"

Lumian and Camus retreated their gazes in silence as they climbed the final stairs and entered the second floor of the house.

Lumian surveyed the spacious yet rudimentary surroundings, listening to the wild roars from the primitive forest. He sat cross-legged.

He had intended to tell Rhea, "It's impossible for your entire tribe to be wiped out. Some must have been captured and sold like you. They could still be alive on plantations, in mines, or seedy bars." But he held back.

He could tell Rhea had accepted her current life and gained the ability to live better. It seemed inappropriate to encourage her to risk traversing both continents seeking potential remaining clansmen.

Just the thought of such an endeavor was daunting. With so few clues and them likely scattered far, it could prove quite dangerous. Even spending a lifetime, one might never complete it. Not everyone with a similar experience would sacrifice a normal life for vengeance or seeking others.

Rhea likely realized some clansmen survived, but perhaps those most important to her had perished. She chose to stay in Port Pylos.

Everyone makes their own choices. I can't ask the same of others just because of my own obsessions… Lumian composed himself and smiled at Camus and Rhea, who were still standing.

"Would you like to explore the potential venue for the Dream Festival?"

"Where?" Rhea blurted out.

Camus furrowed his brow.

"Here?"

Quickly making a guess, he asked, "Do you come here every night to sleep and access the Dream Festival's location? Is it in a special dream?"

Quite smart… Lumian praised Camus inwardly for his quick thinking, but his smile remained unwavering.

"Care to experience it?"

Camus and Rhea exchanged glances and agreed, "I'll experience it. Rhea, keep an eye on the surroundings."

"I can set some traps," Lumian offered. He stood up and spent a few minutes setting up warning traps nearby.

Afterward, he lit a mosquito repellent candle, placing it in the middle of the spacious second floor.

Mosquitoes that hadn't flown away landed on the ground, emitting flames and smoke amidst crackling sounds.

"Sleep here," Lumian instructed Camus and Rhea as he sat cross-legged again.

He had confirmed that sleeping anywhere in Hisoka's house at night allowed him to enter the special dream. Sleeping outside or sleeping two hours earlier didn't have the same effect.

Perplexed, Camus and Rhea found seats and leaned against different wooden pillars, attempting to enter a deep slumber.

After an unknown period of time, Camus suddenly woke up.

Before him was the night and the crimson moonlight outside the window. Louis Berry stood behind the flickering mosquito repellent candle, wearing a golden straw hat. The adventurer playfully remarked, "Welcome to the Dream Festival."

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Chapter 667 Approaching Gentleness

?Camus's nerves tensed as he propped himself up on his left hand, surveying his surroundings warily.

He realized he was still on the second floor of Twanaku's house. Rhea, who had been leaning against a wooden pillar, stood up in a daze.

Everything around him seemed no different from before he had fallen asleep.

"Are you joking?" Camus asked Louis Berry cautiously.

What kind of Dream Festival is this?

This feels like a normal awakening after a nap!

Lumian turned and pointed out the window.

"Listen to the forest sounds."

Camus and Rhea instinctively listened, realizing that the nearby forest was eerily silent, as if all its inhabitants had fallen asleep in the night.

Wh— Rhea's eyes narrowed.

Born and raised in the primitive forest and having lived in Tizamo Town for nearly a year, she knew the forest wouldn't be in such absolute silence.

Lumian pointed at the floor beside the mosquito repellent candle.

"Look here again."

Camus and Rhea looked over, realizing that the mosquito corpses that should have been there were gone.

Lumian chuckled.

"Of course, you can also believe that I woke up early, cleaned up the environment, and secretly affected your hearing of distant voices. All of this was just a prank."

Camus pondered for a few seconds.

"I'm inclined to believe you, but I need to confirm something."

"Indeed," Rhea chimed in, carrying a hunting bow and arrows.

Lumian looked at them and nodded slightly. He calmly concluded, I can now determine that the reason I remain conscious in this peculiar dream stems from a hidden power within Hisoka's house, not any special traits of my own.

He had invited Camus and Rhea to slumber in Hisoka's house and enter the special dream not merely to share information with the patrol team and gather a few aides.

No, it was also an experiment to uncover key details!

Over the past few days, Lumian had conducted numerous similar trials, grasping the dream's nuanced patterns like a seasoned explorer mapping uncharted lands.

With hands tucked nonchalantly in his pockets, he trailed behind Camus and Rhea, who hurried downstairs. He wanted to witness how they would confirm whether this was indeed a dream.

After departing Twanaku's house, the two patrol members rushed to the nearest townsperson's abode.

Upon realizing the livestock had vanished from the ground floor, Rhea swiftly ascended to the second story and attempted to unlock the door with a simple iron-black key.

Camus opened his mouth as if to dissuade her, but in the end, remained silent.

Observing this, Lumian nodded thoughtfully and muttered to himself, A Beyonder of the Arbiter pathway will subconsciously maintain the current order, unwilling to disrupt its fabric. If such Beyonders also bear official identities, this tendency only intensifies…

Rhea rapped upon the door and entered the dwelling. She and Camus scoured each room, but the resident family had seemingly evaporated into thin air.

Then, the pair made their way to the police station near the Saint-Sien Cathedral's hallowed grounds.

The local patrol quarters held five rooms in total.

Kolobo, Maslow, and Loban were nowhere to be found, nor were the two officers meant to stand the night watch.

"I now believe this is a dream," Camus declared to Louis Berry, who leisurely trailed with hands tucked in pockets, a golden straw hat shading his features. "Yet I'm so utterly awake that it defies the very notion of a dream."

Before Lumian could respond, Rhea's light-brown face furrowed slightly.

"When I ran down the street and searched these rooms, it felt a little… familiar."

"Familiar?" Lumian asked calmly, his brows unfurrowed.

Could there be unexpected gains from this experiment?

Rhea pondered for a moment.

"I think I've had a similar dream before."

"In my dream, it was just as dark and quiet. The streets were empty, and I was alone. I ran around, searching…"

"Was it a mere fragment or a complete dream?" Lumian pressed.

Rhea thought for a few seconds.

"I don't know. I only remember a few such scenes."

"Do you often dream of this, or only occasionally?" Lumian guided her to confirm the details.

Rhea replied with certainty, "Occasionally."

"Occasionally…"

Even if the Tizamo residents don't slumber here on a specific date, they can occasionally enter this peculiar dream, yet remain unable to stay awake. Like a normal dream?

Perhaps it's not true immersion, but rather an unconscious development spiritually spawned from the crimson moon and other environmental elements, allowing them to vaguely interact. Unfortunately, Rhea clearly doesn't recall the moon, weather, and other situational details from those dreams. If I could employ Dream Divination, I could aid her recollection…

The few Tizamons I queried in Port Pylos made no mention of such dreams. Firstly, dreams so ordinary often slip the mind. Secondly, they've been away from Tizamo for years… As Lumian's thoughts raced, he turned to Camus to see if the Interrogator had any queries.

Camus pondered for a moment before asking Rhea, "What do you think is special about the residents of Tizamo?"

Very perceptive. Since this dream seems to affect the entire town and surrounding area, it's likely these people will display some abnormality in waking life… Lumian nodded inwardly.

Rhea thought for a moment.

"Nothing special. It's just that they're very… obedient."

At this, Rhea sighed.

"They're extremely polite to others. Gentle personalities, stable emotions, very obedient. Even when angered, they quickly calm down. When trouble arises, they tend to let the authorities handle it instead of fighting amongst themselves or causing public disturbances…"

These were all situations Lumian had heard Camus mention and seen in the corresponding intel. On the surface, nothing seemed amiss. It was a state of being tamed.

Rhea added, "Their only issue is a lack of enthusiasm. It's not that politeness masks an underlying coldness or hatred. They're simply… unenthusiastic, as if reluctant to openly display emotion."

Upon hearing this, Lumian recalled the Tizamons he'd interacted with over the past few days.

Apart from some gentlemen and ladies from the Northern Continent, the others were calm, gentle, and disinclined to argue. They always communicated politely.

Immediately after, he recalled the Tizamons questioned in Port Pylos—fear, worry, ingratiating expressions, vivid emotions.

Clearly different from the Tizamo townspeople!

Most of their emotions have been drawn away into the dream? Lumian finally pinpointed an abnormality about the Tizamons.

Their issue clearly didn't stem solely from attacks by the primitive forest tribe!

Upon hearing Lumian's guess, Camus couldn't help but hiss.

"I knew it. The Tizamons feel… strange. Too docile. Even livestock occasionally grow agitated, resists… Could the reason be…"

Rhea's heart skipped a beat as she said solemnly, voice laced with fear, "I've been here nearly a year, and I feel much gentler…

"My most intense emotions haven't dissipated. They're still in my heart, but most of the time, it's as if I'm… asleep…"

Rhea began analyzing herself. "From the looks of it, everyone in Tizamo will gradually be affected by this peculiar dream. After leaving, they can slowly escape its influence." Lumian glanced at Camus. "For outsiders like us, who've only been here a few days, there's no issue for now. Perhaps we'll also become unnaturally gentle if we linger too long."

Without waiting for Camus's response, Lumian inquired, "When will reinforcements from the patrol team and Admiral Guard arrive?"

At the mention of this, Camus's expression soured. He gritted his teeth and cursed, "Those selfish bastards! It's very likely there won't be much support."

"The Admiral Guard said they already have a Beyonder team here and an army. Only Captain Reaza expressed backing for the patrol team. Dammit, those dogsh*t!"

Lumian was taken aback for a moment before bursting into laughter. The newly formed organization under the aboriginal admiral was indeed different from the official Northern Continent organizations.

If this were the Eternal Blazing Sun Church or Church of Earth Mother, the official Beyonders would have already devised a plan and dispatched sufficient force to resolve the issue. They'd be prepared to obliterate Tizamo if anything went awry.

The current situation is Admiral Querarill believes that with me—a famed adventurer backed by the Church of The Fool, here—I'm able to use its power to resolve Tizamo's troubles. Is there a need to send more Beyonder subordinates to aid me?

That's true. Beyonders aren't commodities. If too many powerful ones perish, not only will Admiral Querarill feel the strain, but he won't be able to effectively rule Matani…

Recruitment alone can't quickly fill such a gap, and they won't be quick to trust newcomers. Even nurturing the remaining people with the retrieved Beyonder characteristics poses huge problems. Low-Sequence Beyonders are manageable, but Mid-Sequence advancement carries high failure risk. After all, most here haven't mastered the acting method… Lumian quickly grasped Admiral Querarill's mentality.

He said to the agitated Camus, "Let me show you around this dream realm and provide an introduction."

"Alright." Camus took a deep breath.

He and Rhea followed Lumian through the dark, silent, vacant town.

After a long while, Lumian led the two patrol members into the primitive forest. He informed them he'd seen Twanaku's image in the chaotic zone ahead, seemingly composed of dream fragments. He suspected there was a Desire Apostle mark present.

Walking amongst the trees, giants in the night, Camus felt increasingly oppressed.

Before he could inquire about Twanaku's image details, he suddenly heard a bowstring drawn taut.

Pa!

An arrow, entwined with lightning, flew from afar. Camus dodged just in time as it grazed past, piercing into a rubber tree behind him amidst crackling lightning and charred bark. Lumian, Camus, and Rhea gazed into the distance, spotting a woman standing on a huge tree branch.

The woman wore dark leather armor, holding a hunting bow and arrows. Her brown hair was tied in two strands draped over her shoulders.

Her light brown skin and wild, beautiful face couldn't hide the coldness and hatred behind her eyes.

Rhea!

It was Rhea!

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Chapter 668 Dream Person?

Rhea gazed at the figure perched on the tree branch, a surreal scene playing out before her like a dream. Correction: This was a dream.

The other Rhea's frigid expression masked a deep-seated hatred as she drew the bowstring once more, causing the arrow to crackle with silver lightning.

As Lumian contemplated teleporting behind Rhea on the tree to probe her control in this eerily realistic dream and question her about her apparent "knowledge" of the situation, his surroundings quivered and fragmented into disjointed scenes.

The scenes overlapped and promptly shattered.

Simultaneously, Lumian, Rhea, and Camus opened their eyes. Crimson moonlight spilled through the window, accompanied by the primal roars of wild beasts from the nearby forest.

They found themselves still on the second floor of Hisoka's house.

Camus jolted upright, eyeing the mosquito repellent candle that had burned out, leaving behind a mere stub. Charred mosquito corpses littered the area.

"Are we awake? Have we returned to reality?" Camus questioned, uncertainty clouding his expression.

Leaning against a wooden pillar, Lumian chuckled.

"That should be the case, but I won't claim we're 100% out of the dream.

"We'll need to verify through various details in the coming period."

The simplest method involved checking Ludwig's whereabouts and state.

Although asking Termiboros could provide an accurate answer, there was no guarantee the fellow would answer or respond truthfully.

Camus nodded, his gaze shifting to Rhea, who had remained silent since waking up. After a brief pause, he spoke.

"We seem to have witnessed another version of you at the dream's boundary."

Another Rhea, embodying entirely different emotions and states.

Rhea stayed silent for a moment before admitting, "I saw it too.

"She appears much like the intense emotions I mentioned earlier—the ones slumbering in my heart."

Lumian adjusted his golden straw hat, standing up on his own legs. He spoke thoughtfully, "Could that dream absorb the intense emotions in Tizamo and give rise to the corresponding Dream Person—an even more extreme and emotional entity?"

"So, the longer one stays in Tizamo, the more subdued they become," Camus concurred with Louis Berry's hypothesis, and Rhea nodded in agreement.

Mirror People… Dream People… How many peculiar entities lingered in the shadows of this world? Lumian massaged his temples and strode towards the stairs leading to the surface.

"That concludes tonight's attempt," he casually declared.

Camus and Rhea followed closely, confirming their escape from the dream through the return of livestock and the commotion in the house.

They waited until Lumian entered the Brieu Motel before halting, concealing themselves in the shadows diagonally opposite.

…

Lumian pushed open the door to the suite, spotting Ludwig at the dining table, devouring a roasted banana with gusto. In his other hand, he wielded a child's fork, delving into a special salad crafted from the heart of a palm tree.

Observing this, Lumian was certain that this wasn't a dream.

He cast a glance at Lugano, who was dozing off, and nonchalantly inquired of Ludwig, "Do you dream when you sleep?"

Despite being occupied, Ludwig replied, "Yes."

Lumian nodded thoughtfully.

"Have you had any dreams in the past few days?"

Taking a moment between bites of grilled river fish, Ludwig responded, "Yes."

"What dreams did you have?" Lumian removed his golden straw hat, stowing it back into his Traveler's Bag.

Ludwig replied with a muffled voice, "Eat, eat, eat…"

Indeed, I shouldn't expect much… Lumian chuckled self-deprecatingly and turned his attention to Lugano.

"What dreams did you have?"

Is there something wrong with the dreams here? Lugano contemplated asking but decided to answer truthfully.

"All kinds of dreams…"

He paused before adding, "Perhaps it's been too long since I went out alone. Haha, I didn't have a chance to release my pent-up emotions. Occasionally, I'd dream of women and such matters, only to realize that something was amiss. Either the target transformed into a monster, or the initially alluring woman was covered in tree warts, wheat, and mushrooms… Then, I'd wake up in shock."

As an Intisian, he had no reservations discussing such topics.

According to the psychology taught by Anthony, your pent-up desires and fear of the dangers in Tizamo are a mix of unresolved factors… Lumian commented inwardly and smiled.

"You can explore the Giant Boa bar alone, find a local lady, or mingle with the ladies and maids in the plantation outside. As long as you ensure food for Ludwig, he'll manage on his own."

Initially, Lugano's heart raced, but the potential dangers outside soon came to mind.

Lumian headed towards the master bedroom, leaving a parting sentence with a smile.

"Of course, I can't guarantee those ladies won't turn into monsters or undergo anomalies after your little adventure."

"…" Lugano couldn't help but shudder at the imagined scenario.

He glanced at Ludwig, finding comfort in staying by the boy's side.

Until all the stored food was consumed, he considered himself safe!

…

In the shadows diagonally opposite the Brieu Motel, Rhea observed in silence for a while before suddenly speaking up.

"Since there won't be any new reinforcements from the Admiral Guard, and only Deputy Captain Reaza will come from the patrol team, why didn't you leave Tizamo directly? Why did you stay here and attempt to resolve the Dream Festival problem?"

As long as he escaped Matani, the Admiral Guard and patrol team wouldn't have the resources to track and punish them. At most, they could issue a wanted poster,

but they wouldn't be able to pay a high bounty.

Camus scratched his disheveled brown hair, smiling wryly.

"As you know, my previous Sequence was a Public Security Officer. It tied seamlessly with the patrol team's usual work, making me yearn to maintain order in Matani and safeguard the lives of the people here.

"The potion not only brings strength but also affects you in many ways."

He exhaled and continued, "Besides, Captain Reaza is about to arrive. I have to help him. I have to repay what I owe him."

Camus didn't disclose another reason: his confidence in the adventurer Louis Berry and the Church of The Fool behind him. He believed that with Louis Berry present, the situation would be threatening but not perilous.

Rhea didn't press further, continuing to gaze diagonally at the Brieu Motel.

Camus glanced at her.

"What about you? Why don't you leave Tizamo with Loban and the others now? The three of you can form a team. Some local admirals will be willing to take you in."

Rhea's eyes remained fixed on Louis Berry's suite as she stayed silent.

After a prolonged silence, just as Camus thought she wouldn't answer, Rhea suddenly spoke.

"When I was in the most pain and despair, it was the Church who helped me. After that, it was the patrol team who gave me a new beginning and a new life."

Recalling the cold Rhea's face filled with hatred in the dream, Camus sighed sincerely and said, "It hasn't been easy for you."

The moment he finished speaking, Rhea sneered.

"You're the most contradictory person I've ever encountered. In the past, I've often heard you talk about which states and islands the Feynapotter Kingdom should invade, which mines and valleys they should seize, and how they should establish more colonies in the Southern Continent. But now, you're showing pity towards me.

"I can sense your sincerity. You genuinely feel pain for me, but that's why I can't help but want to say something."

Camus found himself at a loss for words.

Indeed, it was a contradiction.

He also realized that Rhea's emotions had become even more turbulent after encountering herself in the dream. She seemed more willing to open up.

Could this be the result of encountering extreme emotions? Or perhaps those who hadn't spent more than a year in Tizamo might resist the dream's influence to some extent if they grasped the truth of "obedience"? Camus quickly thought of the plantations outside the town and individuals like Sir Petit, Miss Amandina, Monsieur Robert, and the others.

These gentlemen and ladies weren't easily subdued.

The special dream had evidently encompassed both the out-

of-town plantation and the garrison barracks.

Camus figured out the reason: These gentlemen and ladies spent at least half their time in Port Pylos each year.

This also explained why he was familiar with them.

…

At noon the next day, shortly after Lumian dispatched the letter, he received a prompt reply from Madam Magician:

"Did the Eternal Blazing Sun Church present this price, or was it your offer?

"Can a Grade 1 Sealed Artifact be exchanged for such trifles?

"If I didn't know the kind of person you are, I would suspect that you concealed more than half of the offer from the Eternal Blazing Sun Church.

"In addition to the information related to this Grade 1 Sealed Artifact, ensure the Eternal Blazing Sun Church provides an additional 50,000 pounds worth of gold at the highest exchange rate in the past three months.

"Don't worry, gold is the last thing they need."

Gold worth 50,000 pounds… That's approximately 1.2 million verl d'or worth of gold. Why would Madam Magician require such a substantial amount of gold? Recalling the importance of gold in mysticism, the Armored Shadow's need to reconstruct its golden body, and the widespread use of gold in Death-related domains, he swiftly arrived at a realization.

A subtle detail caught his attention.

Madam Magician used the Loen Kingdom's gold pound to express the value of gold.

Does this imply her recent activity in the Loen Kingdom? Lumian nodded thoughtfully, considering whether to summon Jenna's messenger, Rabbit Chasel, to convey Madam Magician's request, or to return to Trier personally for discussions on the Dream Festival with Franca, Jenna, and Anthony.

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Chapter 669 Connivance

Recalling Franca's meeting with 007 tonight to discuss dealing with Moran Avigny, Lumian decided to summon Jenna's messenger, Rabbit Chasel, as he had to return to Trier tomorrow to discuss the division of labor and specific details.

After jotting down Madam Magician's request and folding it, Lumian set up a ritual, allowing the special Rabbit of Knowledge to emerge from the candle's flames.

The first thing Lumian noticed was the miniature half top hat snugly perched between the rabbit's ears. Next, he saw gold-rimmed glasses and a black trench coat that matched the vaguely rabbit-shaped creature's size. Finally, an iron-black revolver lay in the rabbit's palm.

The revolver gleamed with a metallic luster, its barrel unusually thick, and its cylinder unnaturally large and textured. It stood in stark contrast to the illusory appearance of the top hat, trench coat, and gold-rimmed glasses.

Upon seeing Rabbit Chasel, Lumian raised his eyebrows.

"Is this a real gun?"

Hidden behind the gold-rimmed glasses, Rabbit Chasel's eyes sharpened.

"Yes."

"Did Jenna customize it for you?" Lumian inquired.

Rabbit Chasel replied succinctly, "It's payment."

Quite a cold demeanor… Miss Celia Bello, have you considered the consequences of what you've done? You haven't! Because I don't know the consequences either unless I consult Madam Magician… Lumian criticized inwardly before handing the folded letter to Rabbit Chasel.

Seeing the human-like, rabbit-shaped creature preparing to turn and walk into the candle flame, Lumian, the Prankster King of Cordu, asked with interest, "Can you shoot?"

Rabbit Chasel fell silent for a moment, as if embarrassed.

"Not yet."

Oh, you're not as cold as Gehrman Sparrow anymore… Lumian chuckled and said, "Jenna and I are friends. I'll help her pay the postage fee this time.

"Do you want to learn shooting? It involves knowledge and guidance."

Rabbit Chasel, taller than an ordinary rabbit, replied without hesitation, "Sure thing."

Lumian's smile broadened.

After finding a secluded spot at the edge of the primitive forest and earnestly teaching Rabbit Chasel how to shoot for a considerable time, Lumian strolled back to Tizamo with his hands in his pockets, planning to visit the only café for afternoon tea.

The café bore the name "Bunia" after its owner, a man named Bunia.

He was under the age of 30. Having once served as a waiter and apprentice at a café in Port Pylos, Bunia, recalling the lack of a proper café in Tizamo Town, transformed the ground floor of his house into a semi-open café.

Lumian, weaving through the tables and chairs on the street, arrived at the kitchen counter, offering a smile to the proprietor and waiter, Bunia.

"Do you have Fermo coffee?"

Bunia's brown skin, not too dark, and his features resembling those of mixed blood, showcased his Tizamon heritage.

The man in his late twenties responded with an honest smile in fluent Intisian.

"Monsieur, there's no Fermo coffee."

Lumian, intending to playfully inquire, casually switched to a cup of Corsa coffee from Matani.

Sipping the bitter and sweet liquid at a table, he noticed Camus, adorned in a vest, and Rhea, clad in leather armor, entering the café. Each ordered an Intis coffee and a corn nutcake imbued with Tizamo flair.

Upon spotting Rhea, the single Bunia became even more bashful and busier, avoiding eye contact.

As Camus and Rhea, equipped with their coffee and corn nutcakes, sought a spot, Lumian raised his arm in greeting.

As Camus and Rhea reluctantly settled into their seats across from him, Lumian inquired with a smile, "Why do you look so tired?"

Glancing at the energetic adventurer, Camus took a deep breath and slowly exhaled.

"We just finished work. We can finally rest."

Yesterday, he had monitored the Brieu Motel late into the night!

"All I want now is a good night's sleep." After exploring the dream together last night, Rhea wasn't as reticent as before when facing Lumian.

"Then why are you still drinking coffee?" Lumian replied with amusement.

It was evident that Rhea and Camus lacked the energy of a Sleepless.

"I want to endure until dinner before sleeping," Camus said with a sigh.

Rhea shook her head.

"Coffee is useless to me."

After a brief chat, Rhea finished her corn nutcake and coffee, then headed back to the nearby police headquarters to rest. Camus continued to recline in the armchair, occasionally taking a sip of coffee.

"Has Reaza arrived?" Lumian inquired with a smile.

Camus fell silent for a moment.

"He's here. Tonight, one of the two—Maslow and Loban—will be following you with him."

As for Kolobo, there was no need for him to be on duty. If he didn't even dare to look, how could he do any monitoring?

While they conversed, Lumian noticed Miss Amandina from Palm Manor leading a short unicorn outside the Bunia café, exuding high spirits.

The blue-eyed girl was clad in off-white hunting attire today, her black hair fashioned into a half-height bun.

After entrusting the whip and reins to the brown-skinned valet, she strolled to the kitchen counter with her lady's maid, who also bore an Intisian appearance.

Along the way, she cheerfully greeted the patrons in the café and exchanged pleasantries with the locals sipping on inexpensive coffee.

Observing Camus's gaze fixed on the girl, Lumian teased, "Do you wish to engage in a duel with her fiancé?"

"No, I'm not that kind of person," Camus replied with a serious expression. "I admit that she's indeed very attractive to me, but she's already engaged to Monsieur Robert. This is a sign that she's starting a family. I can't allow myself to destroy someone else's family."

You Feynapotterians… Lumian didn't mock him but sighed with emotion.

Such values appealed to Feynapotter.

Of course, not every Feynapotterian possessed such values.

Seeing Lumian's lack of response, Camus said seriously, "Don't have any ideas about her."

Lumian regarded the young man surnamed Castiya with amusement, awaiting further "explanation."

Camus furrowed his brow slightly.

"I know you Intisians won't back down just because the other party has a fiancé or a husband. You might find it even more exciting, but you always pursue momentary pleasure. Very few are willing to take responsibility. You always satisfy yourself. When you're happy, you turn around and leave, leaving a lady to face everything that's been destroyed."

"Not every Intisian is like this," Lumian shook his head with a smile.

But most Trieriens are like that… However, neither party is innocent in such matters… he added inwardly.

The energetic and playful Amandina led the lady's maid past Camus and Lumian's table.

First, she greeted Camus, then sized up Lumian and said candidly, "I'm Amandina. What about you?"

"Louis Berry," Lumian replied with a smile.

Amandina nodded and suddenly laughed.

"You must have just arrived from Trier. You're different from the people here."

"No, I'm from a village in the south," Lumian switched to Intisian with a Dariège accent.

Amandina wasn't disappointed. She happily inquired about the folklore of the southern provinces of the Intis Republic before leading the lady's maid to a table in the corner.

Camus watched as the two of them conversed. He opened his mouth but closed it again.

…

Trier, Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative.

Jenna was curled up on the sofa, engrossed in the novels she had just bought, all with elements of Witches. Suddenly, Rabbit Chasel appeared in front of her and handed her a letter.

Observing the bizarre yet adorable rabbit-shaped creature, Jenna opened the letter and scanned its contents before asking earnestly, "Do you wish to select your payment, or shall I choose a random book for you?"

"Lumian Lee has already settled the payment on your behalf," Rabbit Chasel said in a deep yet sincere voice.

Witch Jenna suddenly felt a sense of foreboding.

"What has he paid?"

"He imparted shooting-related knowledge to me and guided me through the initial stage of my practice," Rabbit Chasel raised the special revolver in his hand, briefly aimed it at the door behind Jenna, and then swiftly lowered it.

Wh— Monsieur Lumian Lee, have you considered the consequences of what you've done? Jenna chided, feeling a mix of irritation and amusement.

However, the deed was done, and she was powerless to reverse it.

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Jenna's lips curved into a sweet smile.

"The next payment will be for a genuine underarm holster. And after that, custom-made bullets with special effects. How does that sound?"

Behind his glass glasses, Rabbit Chasel's eyes sparkled.

"Alright!"

…

In Tizamo Town, night had already fallen, and darkness shrouded the area.

Lumian stood in Hisoka's house, glancing at the stern vice-

captain of the Port Pylos patrol team, Reaza, and the local patrol team leader, Maslow, whose face was adorned with white paint. As though instructing Lugano, he said, "Watch out for any accidents."

This time, he spoke in Dutanese.

"Alright." It wasn't the first time Maslow had accompanied Louis Berry, the great adventurer, and he was already accustomed to his style.

Dressed in a sleek formal suit, Reaza remained silent, signaling that there was no issue.

Lumian retrieved the brown Mystery Prying Glasses from his Traveler's Bag.

Tonight, his first task was to use this magical item to observe Hisoka's house from various angles, hoping to unveil the source of its abnormality.

After confirming his condition and preparations, Lumian placed the brown gold-rimmed glasses on the bridge of his nose.

A familiar wave of dizziness washed over Lumian, as if his surroundings had been disrupted and reassembled.

He witnessed poisonous insects crawling in the "sky," two walls that seemed to dance in circles, and an underground water puddle deep in the soil that appeared to absorb all light.

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Chapter 670 Sudden Arrival

Amidst the dizzying sensation that threatened to separate his spirit from his body, Lumian saw trees that seemed to slumber in the darkness and a pitch-black boulder…

Finally, he removed the brown glasses from his nose and arched his back slightly to alleviate the discomfort.

Even an Ascetic wouldn't be able to use the Mystery Prying Glasses for long.

Of course, this ensured his safety to a certain degree.

Through this "prying," Lumian confirmed two things.

First, the area beneath Hisoka's house was indeed unusual, but it seemed more like an illusory symbol than an actual entity. It indicated that this place had once been corrupted or influenced, with the most severe occurrence taking place underground.

Second, this influence was connected to the black boulder deep within the primitive forest.

"How did it go?" Maslow, his face painted white, asked.

Lumian stored the Mystery Prying Glasses back into his Traveler's Bag and smiled.

"The abnormality I 'saw' here originates from a black boulder deep in the primitive forest. Have you ever seen or heard of that black boulder?"

The pale-white Reaza and Maslow, his black hair falling over his shoulders, shook their heads in unison, indicating a negative answer.

Lumian wasn't in a rush to do the second thing he had planned for the night. He glanced at Reaza, who was wearing a thin formal suit and appeared to be a mix of Intisian and West Balam heritage. He casually said, "I thought that with your arrival, some people in Tizamo would gradually leave and stay in Port Pylos for a while.

"As you know, the Dream Festival should start within three days."

Reaza calmly replied, "Based on my experience, except for those who have only arrived in Tizamo in the past two weeks, it's best not to leave this place and go elsewhere to prevent any abnormalities from spreading.

"It should only be considered after the Dream Festival ends and the primitive tribe launches another attack."

Very standardized process… I thought you would consider the opinions of Intis, Feynapotter, and other Northern Continent countries, allowing people with corresponding nationalities to evacuate in advance and protect them. For example, the owners of the plantations outside the city and their families… Yes, this is likely because the Dream Festival has never shown direct harm. It only caused some townsfolk to suffer from hysteria and attracted an attack from the forest's primitive tribe. The first situation could be resolved by a simple Mass. The second problem could be guarded against and fended off… Lumian roughly understood the mentality of Admiral Querarill and the patrol team's leaders.

Since there wouldn't be any major issues, they would act as if the Dream Festival didn't exist, merely advising the local official Beyonders to be vigilant and guard against any mishaps while hoping that the Church of The Fool could resolve the hidden dangers!

If they were to do more, they might trigger something and worsen the situation.

After discussing the matter, Lumian recovered from the discomfort caused by the Mystery Prying Glasses. He took out the unique Eye of Truth and placed it in front of his face.

The relatively handsome Southern Continent native's eyelids twitched at the sight of the pale-white flesh, dark blood vessel-like earmuff and spectacle temple, as well as the blood-colored lens intertwined with transparent purple tubes.

How many glasses does Louis Berry own?

Moreover, each one is a mystical item!

After donning the single-lens Eye of Truth, Lumian surveyed his surroundings, seeking to uncover the truth behind reality.

As he did so, a voice gradually sounded in his ears, growing louder and more chaotic.

Each note and word seemed to materialize, flooding into Lumian's mind.

It made him feel as if his head was rapidly expanding like a balloon.

If the balloon continued to expand, there would only be one outcome: bursting with a resounding bang!

Lumian reached for his ear, ready to remove the Eye of Truth at any moment. He seized the opportunity to scrutinize Hisoka's house.

He believed that it was safer to take the risk of prying into the house's secrets before the Dream Festival, while not inside the special dream. It was safer than

using the Eye of Truth and Mystery Prying Glasses within the dream itself.

Through the purple lens, Lumian couldn't discern much of the truth. Everything appeared similar to what he could see with his naked eye, but the night seemed even darker.

Without hesitation, his eye bulged, and blood vessels appeared on his body. He abruptly removed the Eye of Truth, and a slightly sharp explosion reverberated in his ears.

Phew, phew… Panting heavily, Lumian's mind was in disarray, overwhelmed by a barrage of strange knowledge. He couldn't think straight.

At that moment, even if someone were to ambush him, he wouldn't be able to react quickly.

After more than ten seconds, Lumian finally regained his ability to think clearly. He instinctively organized the knowledge that had been forcefully injected into his mind.

"The art of sophistry…

"How to cultivate superior wheat seeds…

"Canning techniques…

"How to roast pork that's crispy on the outside and tender on the inside…

"Music to soothe a sow's emotions…

"The Revelation of Evernight…

"Favorite Positions of Celebrities—Memoirs of Those Mistresses"

"…"

What's all this nonsense? Can't there be any useful knowledge? In the past, although Aurore had been tormented by the Hidden Sage's instillation of knowledge, she had at least stumbled upon valuable mysticism insights. Wait, had she also been corrupted by such knowledge? Is that why she always portrays a rich theoretical understanding in her books… Lumian rubbed his still throbbing head and said to Reaza and Maslow, "I'm going to the edge of the forest to take a look. Do you want to come with me?"

Reaza nodded, stingy with his words, while Maslow made his stance clear by walking towards the stairs.

If Camus were here, he would undoubtedly smile wryly and say, "Do I have a choice?" Lumian mused to himself. He left Hisoka's house and made his way towards the primitive forest near Tizamo Town.

After crossing the intersection and arriving at another street, Lumian noticed a four-wheeled, four-seater carriage parked at the entrance of the Brieu Motel.

An attendant and a lady's maid stepped out of the carriage, carrying their luggage, and followed a man and a woman towards the motel.

The man was attired in a dark-gray formal suit and a half top hat. His complexion resembled that of someone from the Northern Continent, and his side profile was well-defined, with striking dark green eyes. The woman wore a light-

colored dress that allowed for ease of movement and a feathered hat adorned with pearls. She appeared to be in her late twenties, and her skin was delicate and radiant. One would easily determine that she was a beauty just from glimpsing her side profile.

Lumian averted his gaze and turned to Reaza and Maslow.

"Is it the weekend?"

"No," Maslow replied, understanding the implication behind Louis Berry's question. "Gentlemen and ladies often find time to hunt in Tizamo, not just on weekends."

Lumian turned to Reaza and inquired, "You didn't seal off this area?"

"That would only cause unnecessary panic," Reaza responded succinctly.

Lumian didn't press the matter further. He walked out of the town through the Brieu Motel and ventured into the primitive forest.

He delved deeper along the path he had become familiar with from the dream.

Finally, he arrived at the chaotic zone in reality, where various dream fragments intertwined.

It was an unremarkable place, indistinguishable from its surroundings.

Lumian found a palm tree and sat down. He turned to Reaza and Maslow and said, "Keep an eye on my surroundings. I'm going to sleep here."

He wanted to see what would happen if he fell asleep closer to the source of the abnormality, if he could enter that peculiar dream, and in what state.

Receiving affirmative responses from the two patrol team members, Lumian closed his eyes and attempted Cogitation.

At some point, he drifted off to sleep.

After an unknown period, he awoke.

Catching sight of Reaza and Maslow, Lumian rose to his feet and nodded thoughtfully.

This place doesn't work either… Is Hisoka's house the only effective location?

Or should I find that black boulder and sleep near it?

Lumian gazed into the pitch-black forest, contemplating for a few moments before turning to Reaza and Maslow.

"Let's head back."

The trio swiftly returned to Tizamo.

The late night had settled in, and the streets were devoid of any passersby. No lights or sounds emanated from the houses on either side. Occasionally, the snorts of livestock on the ground floor of the buildings could be heard, accentuating the pervading darkness and silence. The dim crimson moon's light seemed to emphasize the depths of the darkness.

On this dark night, Lumian walked along a muddy road, heading towards the Brieu Motel situated deep within the street. Reaza and Maslow followed quietly behind him.

Suddenly, Lumian's mind spun, and his vision momentarily blurred before clearing.

This is… His pupils dilated as he instinctively scanned his surroundings but found nothing amiss.

At that moment, in a vacant house on the ground floor diagonally ahead, a dim candlelight illuminated a room on the third floor.

Immediately after, glass windows on this street and throughout Tizamo Town were set aglow by the light of burning candles.

...

Rhea awoke to find that darkness had already descended, but the candles in many houses continued to burn.

This indicated that it wasn't too late.

Feeling lazy, Rhea had no desire to prepare her own food. Carrying her bow and arrows, she left the room and exited the police headquarters from the side, making her way towards the nearby Bunia café.

The streets were nearly deserted, as they were every night.

Rhea glanced at the tables and chairs still scattered along the street and approached the kitchen counter. In Dutanese, she said to the busy café owner and waiter, Bunia, who had his head lowered, "A glass of Cosa and a beef burrito."

Bunia paused in the midst of washing cups and looked up.

His naturally curly black hair gave him a mixed-blood appearance. He looked at Rhea and revealed an obvious, strange smile that made Rhea inexplicably uneasy.

Rhea knew Bunia well and was aware that he was a shy, kind, and adult man who wasn't particularly adept at communicating with women. He had never smiled like this before.

Bunia fixed his gaze on Rhea and chuckled in a deep voice.

"You've got big boobs."

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Chapter 671 Beginning

Upon hearing Bunia's words, Rhea was so surprised that she forgot her anger.

It wasn't the first time she had encountered such a situation. She was shocked that a man who had left a good impression on her would show such an expression and say such words.

And this was when they weren't even friends!

At that moment, Rhea wondered if she was still half-asleep. She also questioned whether Bunia had suffered a mental illness or succumbed to hysteria as the Dream Festival drew near.

Amidst Rhea's bewilderment, Bunia's smile intensified.

He extended his hands across the kitchen counter and attempted to grab Rhea's chest.

Instinctively, Rhea leaned back, attempting to dodge.

After failing to touch her, Bunia retracted his hands, propped himself up on the kitchen counter, and leaped up. Amidst the clinking of coffee cups and glass jars, he lunged at Rhea, who was leaning back.

This reaction, this choice, and this display of power caught Rhea off guard. She didn't have time to remove the bow and arrow from her back. Her waist bent backward, and her right foot kicked up like the other end of a seesaw, sending the transformed Bunia café owner flying.

Simultaneously, a thought flashed through Rhea's mind.

Has he truly lost his mind?

Crash. Bunia crashed to the side of the kitchen counter.

Rhea exerted strength in her back and stood up straight again. Then, she took off her hunting bow, nocked an arrow, and aimed at Bunia, who had just stood up.

A look of fear crossed Bunia's face. He froze for a moment before pleading, "Don't —don't kill me!

"I suddenly lost control just now!"

Looking at Bunia's pleading and fearful face, Rhea found him both familiar and unfamiliar. The arrow on the bowstring was drawn back, but she didn't release it.

…

Entering the streets of Tizamo Town from the primitive forest, Lumian observed the illuminated houses on both sides and scoffed.

"Is this supposed to be terrifying and bizarre?"

This wasn't the first time he had encountered such a scene. In Fourth Epoch Trier, he had witnessed a similar occurrence. Not only had the dark town regained its lights, but the entire Fourth Epoch Trier had transitioned from silence to noisiness, returning to life.

Faced with this abnormality, Lumian was undoubtedly surprised and highly vigilant. However, he wasn't overwhelmed by intense emotions. On the surface, he observed his surroundings leisurely.

He realized that Reaza and Maslow had vanished. The two patrol team members who should have been following him were gone.

Since it can silently make two Beyonders disappear right under my nose, it can definitely make me vanish just like that… In other words, I must have been affected. There's a high chance that the trance was an external manifestation…

From a mysticism perspective, the town, which had already fallen into a deep slumber, relighting without any significant turn of events, signifies that I'm in another scene, one that is originally related but different…

Could it be that I've been forced into a dream?

Has the Dream Festival officially begun?

I didn't sleep in Hisoka's house. Why am I still awake?

Combined with the ongoing investigation, Lumian quickly deduced the current situation.

At that moment, he spotted a figure emerging from a glass window diagonally ahead, surrounded by wooden planks and weeds.

It was a local man in his early forties, with dark brown skin, brown eyes, black hair, and thick lips.

Lumian had seen him before. He was a hunting guide, responsible for leading gentlemen and ladies from Port Pylos and other places into the forest for hunting.

Lumian's impression of him was that he always wore a fawning smile. No matter what others said, he would respond with a string of affirmatives. He never showed

anger, even when punished by the gentlemen and ladies he guided.

Upon seeing Lumian, the hunting guide's lips curled into a cruel smile.

He pushed open the window and raised his other hand, revealing a double-barreled shotgun.

"Die, you Northern Continent dog!"

As the hunting guide cursed, he aimed his double-barreled shotgun at Lumian and pulled the trigger without hesitation.

Bang!

A massive amount of lead spread out in a cone, enveloping the corresponding area.

As the hunting guide took aim, Lumian sidestepped and rolled to the other side of the street.

What greeted his eyes were the previously quiet cows, sheep, and horses.

At that moment, the eyes of these animals seemed to turn bloodshot.

Supporting himself with one hand, Lumian leaped up. Amidst the high-pitched mooing and the hunting guide's aim, he leaped to the middle of the stairs leading to the second floor.

"Ah!" A scream suddenly pierced the air, then stopped abruptly.

The door on the second floor swung open, and Lumian was confronted by a young man drenched in bright red blood. He held a massive axe dripping with the crimson liquid, and behind him lay the mangled corpse of an old man in his fifties, the wound carved deep into his chest.

Lumian, who had been wandering Tizamo Town for days, was no stranger to these two individuals.

Lying on the ground, his eyes wide open, was the leathersmith of Tizamo Town. He would purchase the hides of wild beasts brought back by gentlemen, ladies, and town hunters who didn't want to handle them themselves, processing them and selling the finished products.

The axe-wielding figure was his eldest son, who had studied nitrification, tanning, and other leather production techniques from him. He was known as an obedient young man, and his father wasn't an old-fashioned leathersmith who resorted to physical or verbal violence.

This was a characteristic of the people of Tizamo. They were docile, calm, and devoid of intense emotions.

And now, it appeared that the leathersmith's eldest son had just cleaved his father to death.

Upon seeing Lumian, the lad's eyes overflowed with a bloodthirsty smile.

With a shout, he swung his axe at Lumian. On the other side, the hunting guide began reloading his double-barreled shotgun with new lead rounds.

Lumian's body suddenly turned ethereal, merging with his shadow and vanishing into the darkness beside the steps.

Shadow Transformation!

After using this ability to sneak towards the police headquarters for a few seconds, Lumian suddenly heard someone pleading for mercy in fear.

He left the shadows and transformed back into a human. He saw Rhea aiming an arrow at the café owner, Bunia, but she didn't release it.

At that moment, a colossal anaconda, as thick as a barrel, emerged from the multi-layered hay at the top of the opposite house, hanging upside down.

It widened its cold eyes and foul-smelling mouth, the patterns on its scales seeming to expand and writhe.

This time, Lumian didn't dodge.

Facing the colossal boa attempting to devour him, his eyes darkened as he swung his fist upward.

In an instant, blazing white flames ignited from his fist, enveloping his entire forearm.

Bang!

Lumian's fist smashed into the colossal boa's gaping maw, tearing through the blood-colored flesh and delivering a devastating uppercut to its upper jaw.

Before it could devour its human prey, the colossal boa's cold eyes lost their luster. Its massive body plummeted due to inertia, but Lumian easily sidestepped the falling serpent and retracted his fist.

Clang!

The colossal boa crashed to the ground, its slippery scaled body engulfed in blazing white flames.

Weakness Investigation!

Lumian approached Rhea, noticing that the patrol team member was also regarding him with a vigilant and puzzled expression. He didn't attack immediately.

She… Lumian's heart stirred as a smile played across his lips.

"Looks like you're still lucid."

Wary of Bunia, Rhea observed Louis Berry for a moment, hesitating before speaking.

"Lucid, you say?"

"Yes." Lumian pointed at Bunia, who was glaring at him with undisguised hatred. "Did he attempt to attack you or even rape you?"

"Yes." Rhea didn't ask how he knew. Instead, she inquired, "What's going on?"

Lumian chuckled in response, stating, "Perhaps we've entered the dream once more, but this time, we're not alone."

He made a preliminary judgment based on Rhea's apparent lucidity.

Perhaps the reason for maintaining his own clarity of mind was falling asleep in Hisoka's house and entering the special dream recently!

He needed to find Camus for further confirmation.

Upon hearing Louis Berry's response, a term suddenly flashed through Rhea's mind.

Before she could voice her thoughts, the sound of three chimes suddenly rang out.

The bell's resonant tones reverberated through the streets of Tizamo, as if summoning the town's inhabitants.

Rhea listened intently, her expression shifting slightly.

"It's the cathedral's bell!"

Cathedral, the Saint-Sien Cathedral? Lumian's thoughts immediately turned to the unsettling Padre Cali. He glanced at Rhea.

"Let's go and investigate."

"Alright," Rhea replied without hesitation.

She lowered her bow, no longer aiming the arrow at the café owner, Bunia, and followed Lumian towards the Saint-Sien Cathedral, which was separated from their current location only by the police headquarters.

Bunia's expression fluctuated between longing and hatred, but he didn't dare to pursue them, held back by fear.

Lumian and Rhea sprinted at a breakneck pace. In mere seconds, they traversed the distance past the police headquarters and arrived at the small square in front of the cathedral.

Padre Cali was already standing at the cathedral's entrance.

However, he was no longer clad in the Eternal Blazing Sun Church clergyman's robe with its white and golden threads. Instead, he had donned a dark and intricately designed robe.

The padre, with his dark-brown skin, sunken eyes, and stiff facial features, gazed out at the empty square before his eyes settled on the newly arrived Lumian and Rhea. He held the Bible aloft and shouted with a frenzied expression, "I hereby declare the official commencement of the Dream Festival!

"During the Dream Festival, there are no taboos or restrictions. You are free to do as you wish, including harming and killing.

"Revel in it and unleash all your emotions and desires, everyone!"

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Chapter 672 Greater Trouble

Upon hearing Padre Cali's shout, Rhea raised her hunting bow and aimed an arrow wrapped in silver lightning at the clergyman in the complicated black robe. Unlike when she had faced the café owner, Bunia, the anger in her eyes was even more pronounced now, and there was no hesitation. The padre was blaspheming and apostatizing!

At that moment, a slender and powerful palm appeared in front of Rhea's hunting bow, blocking the arrow.

"You…" Rhea turned to Louis Berry, puzzled as to why he had stopped her.

Lumian replied calmly, "Let's wait and see."

As the two of them conversed, Padre Cali revealed a wanton and flamboyant smile. He turned around and walked back to the cathedral with the Bible in his arms.

The golden dome at the cathedral's top and the statues and decorations on the outer walls dimmed under the crimson moonlight.

After Padre Cali's figure disappeared through the cathedral's open door, Rhea looked at Lumian with a dark expression.

"Why?"

Lumian chuckled in response.

"After realizing that this place is suspected to be a dream, I've been pondering a question."

As he spoke, screams and piercing cries reverberated through Tizamo and the surrounding plantations, echoing through the dark night sky.

"What question?" Rhea pressed.

Without giving a direct response, Lumian said, "It's almost certain that we're participating in the Dream Festival.

"Under such circumstances, if you succeed in attacking Padre Cali, what will happen when the Dream Festival concludes and everyone wakes up?"

Without waiting for Rhea's response, Lumian smiled again.

"If you shoot him in the arm, he'll wake up feeling phantom pain in the corresponding location, as if he's suffering from arthritis and his muscles are tearing.

"If you strike his head with a hammer and knock him out, there's a high chance that he'll have a headache, dizziness, and nervous twitches when he returns to reality.

"If you rape and impregnate him, he'll likely feel nauseous, reflux, and bloated, feeling like he might have a fetus in his stomach when he wakes up.

"If you tie him up, continuously electrocute him, and incinerate him with fire, will he feel those sensations in the real world, as if possessed by wraiths or shadows. He may always feel restrained, paralyzed, or in pain."

Rhea listened calmly, not bothering to question why Padre Cali could get pregnant. The more she listened, the more alarmed she became.

This was because Louis Berry's description matched the various manifestations of mass hysteria in Tizamo that the patrol team had gathered.

Lumian turned to Rhea and asked with a smile, "If you had killed Padre Cali with an arrow, what would happen when the dream recedes?"

"He'll die immediately? No…" Rhea denied it.

Tizamo had no incidents of multiple people suddenly dying in their dreams after a night.

Rhea immediately thought of an abnormality.

Between mid-December and mid-March, 80% of the annual deaths in Tizamo occurred, significantly surpassing those in Port Pylos and the surrounding towns.

She changed her words.

"They will gradually die in an irreversible manner within the next three months?"

With a nod, Lumian replied, "I even suspect that the primitive tribe in the forest launched several attacks in those three months mainly to eliminate those who had died in their dreams, allowing them to die reasonably in reality without revealing anything abnormal.

"From December of last year to this year, they only completed one attack. The reason should be that the attack was very successful. Those who should die are dead, and some who don't deserve to die are also dead. There's no need for them to take the risk and they also lost the motivation to come to Tizamo again."

Rhea listened attentively and pondered for a few seconds.

"The Dream Festival originates from that tribe?"

"It's possible. It's more likely that they guard or worship the source and act according to its revelations," Lumian replied simply.

Rhea nodded slightly.

"No wonder you stopped me from shooting Padre Cali. Everyone in Tizamo is likely a victim."

That's why I didn't counterattack the two assailants and only killed the colossal boa with a single punch, Lumian thought. When awoken from the dream, will the colossal boa crawl in front of me and die? If that's the case, I can add more food to Ludwig's plate…

Lumian surveyed the empty square slumbering in the night.

"Let's find Camus now and see if he's still lucid."

…

In Tizamo, on the third floor of the police headquarters, five rooms and one washroom belonged to the patrol team.

One room was used for day-to-day work, while another was used for storing documents and items. The remaining three apartments belonged to the local patrol team members, one for each person.

With the arrival of Camus and Kolobo, Maslow had temporarily moved to Loban's to vacate a room for his colleagues from Port Pylos.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Amidst the reverberations of the bell, Camus jolted awake.

He glanced out the window into the deep night, illuminated by a faint crimson moonlight. Momentarily disoriented, he wondered about the hour.

Just as Camus reached for his pocket watch, intending to check the time, he noticed Kolobo's absence from the makeshift bed.

A sense of unease washed over him, urging him into action. With silent determination, he rose from his bed under the eerie crimson moonlight, securing his pocket watch and weapon.

Stepping cautiously into the corridor, Camus found it unusually still, cloaked in shadowy silence. Beyond the confines of the police headquarters, eerie cries and distant wails pierced the night, emanating from various corners of Tizamo and its surrounding plantations.

Drawing on his keen awareness honed through experience as a Public Security Officer, Camus sensed a disturbance in his Jurisdiction.

Suddenly, he instinctively dropped to the ground and rolled forward.

A deafening crack echoed through the corridor as a wooden door, which Camus would have passed by, splintered and burst outward.

In the blink of an eye, a broadsword slashed through the air, propelled by a savage force, slicing through the empty corridor.

As Camus swiftly evaded the attack, he turned to face his assailant.

It was Loban, the towering patrol member standing at over 1.9 meters, with short light-gold hair and piercing light-blue eyes.

A cruel smirk adorned the Feysacian's face, his eyes glinting with unmistakable greed.

In the dim moonlight, his features were obscured by shadows, emanating an eerie malevolence.

Upon spotting Loban, Camus's eyes sparked with determination.

Psychic Piercing!

Loban recoiled with a pained cry, instinctively shielding his head with his hands, relinquishing his grip on the broadsword.

Seizing the opportunity, Camus swiftly drew his revolver, taking aim at his teammate.

In a moment of hesitation, Camus faltered, then lowered his weapon.

Bang!

The bullet found its mark, striking Loban's knee with brutal force, tearing through flesh and shattering bone.

A Doctor from the Church of Earth Mother could mend such injuries!

Loban crumpled to the ground, writhing in agony, his attempts to curl up thwarted by the searing pain.

Camus lowered his revolver, rose to his feet, and pressed forward towards the end of the corridor.

As he descended the stairs, Camus passed by a cluttered cubicle, its contents scattered haphazardly, and caught faint murmurs from within.

His heart skipped a beat as he whispered, "Kolobo, is that you?"

A moment of tense silence followed before Kolobo's voice, tinged with panic and fear, replied, "Stay back! Don't come any closer! Spare me!"

Camus frowned, sensing that Kolobo's demeanor was far from his usual composed self.

Though prone to bouts of fear and unease, Kolobo typically pushed through his anxieties to fulfill his duties. This level of hysteria was unprecedented.

What's wrong with Kolobo? Camus wondered.

Choosing to stay put rather than risk exacerbating the situation, Camus observed as Kolobo fell into an uneasy silence, as if attempting to fade into obscurity.

After more than ten seconds, Camus contemplated assessing Kolobo's condition. If it proved dire, he resolved to retreat and seek out Louis Berry.

Suddenly, the sound of two sets of rapid footsteps echoed from below.

Camus swiftly pivoted, training his revolver down the stairs. There, he beheld Louis Berry, sporting a golden straw hat, accompanied by Rhea, armed with a hunting bow and arrow.

Gazing at the barrel aimed in their direction, Louis Berry chuckled lightly, his tone calm.

"Welcome to the Dream Festival."

The Dream Festival? It's the Dream Festival? Realization dawned on Camus. He glanced between the smiling Louis Berry and the serious Rhea, confusion etched on his features.

"Why are we still lucid?"

Observing their composed demeanor, Camus deduced that they hadn't succumbed to the overwhelming emotions and desires that often engulfed dreamers. Yet, he kept his revolver steady, wary of any sudden developments.

"Perhaps our early entry into this peculiar dream, thanks to Twanaku's house, has granted us this lucidity," Lumian proposed, offering his deduction.

Rhea seized the opportunity to suggest that encounters within the dream might hold sway over reality to some extent, sharing the conjecture with Camus.

Initially relieved that he hadn't resorted to lethal force against Loban, Camus's expression turned grave as he addressed his companions.

"The three of us aren't the only Beyonders in Tizamo. If we adhere to the notion that we can't retaliate when attacked, it will severely hamper our ability to defend ourselves."

Lumian smiled. "Who said we can't kill? If someone poses a threat to me, they shall be killed accordingly."

Rhea and Camus fell silent.

After a moment of contemplation, Camus nodded decisively, gesturing towards the sundry compartment nestled in the stairwell.

"Kolobo's extreme reaction stems from fear. He won't pose a threat to us. Let him seek refuge there, undisturbed."

As Rhea concurred, Lumian's expression suddenly shifted.

He asked, "Is Kolobo also in this dream?"

Kolobo, who has been in Tizamo for less than a week like me, has also been forced to participate in the Dream Festival?

"Yes." Camus asked in confusion, "Is there a problem?"

A shadow crossed Lumian's features as he responded gravely.

"This suggests there may be a larger problem at play."

Perhaps one more terrifying than the Dream Festival itself!

Before Camus and Rhea could inquire further, Lumian abruptly interjected.

"Wait here for me."

With that, he vanished from the stairway, utilizing Spirit World Traversal.

Lumian reappeared on the second floor of the Brieu Motel, just outside his suite.

In the next instant, a piercing scream echoed through the air, filled with agony and terror.

It was Lugano.

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Chapter 673 "Sealing" Spell

□□Confirming his fears, Lumian slipped his key into the lock, easing the door to the suite open without a sound.

Now, he knew without a doubt that Ludwig, the terrifying sealed creature, would unleash his hunger and frenzy at the Dream Festival.

Beneath the crimson moonlight streaming through the window, Lugano thrashed wildly, his face twisted in agony.

Lurking at the end of his flailing arm was Ludwig, dressed in a child's nightcap and sky-blue pajamas dotted with yellow stars. The sickening sounds of bones crunching and flesh tearing filled the air.

Amidst the chaos, droplets of blood splattered onto the floor.

Suddenly, Ludwig lunged forward like a frenzied animal, his jaws closing in on Lugano's arm with a sickening crack.

"Ah!"

Lugano's scream pierced the air once more, threatening to blow the roof.

Instinctively, he tried to wrench his arm free from Ludwig's grasp and shove the creature away with his other hand. Pain seared through him, and he felt himself teetering on the edge of unconsciousness.

Observing Ludwig closely, Lumian darted behind him, his nostrils flaring.

Two beams of white light shot forth from his nose, enveloping Ludwig. Ludwig paused, shutting his eyes.

But before Lumian could react, the boy's mouth resumed its relentless assault on Lugano's arm, pulverizing bone and flesh alike.

His eyes snapped open.

The Spell of Harrumph can only daze Ludwig for a moment, and that's only if he's sealed… Lumian reminded himself, taking a deep breath to steady his nerves.

He glanced at Lugano, who had noticed him but was too consumed by agony to speak. Raising a hand, Lumian motioned for Lugano to remain patient.

Though Lugano's mind raced with curses and frustration, he remained unable to voice them.

As thoughts raced through his mind, Lumian gave an imperceptible nod.

Changing his focus, Lumian bypassed Ludwig, who was engrossed in devouring Lugano, and seized Lugano's shoulder.

In an instant, Lumian retrieved a sharp straight sword he had acquired from Port Santa, pulling it from his Traveler's Bag.

What is he trying to do? Amidst the throes of pain, Lugano's thoughts scattered.

With a swift motion, Lumian swung the sword, the blade bursting into white flames.

The fiery sword crashed down upon Lugano's arm, where Ludwig had been feasting, striking at the joint.

With a sharp sound, Lugano's forearm tore away from Ludwig's grasp, leaving behind a gory, truncated limb.

Simultaneously, Lumian's form began to fade, and even Lugano, whom he had grasped, vanished from sight.

Teleport!

But Lumian hadn't gone far. Both he and Lugano reappeared at the suite's doorway.

The agony persisted, but Lugano's momentary relief vanished as Ludwig's figure once again came into view. The sight of the boy, his mouth still bloody with Lugano's remaining forearm, sent a shiver down his spine.

The fear momentarily eclipsed the pain, and Lugano's mind raced with frantic questions.

Why not teleport away from Tizamo?

Why not teleport to Port Pylos?

Why are we still lingering in front of Ludwig?

Meanwhile, Ludwig had turned his attention to the doorway, his blond hair matted with blood, his brown eyes glinting with ravenous hunger.

With the speed of a child his age, he advanced toward Lumian and Lugano,

all the while chewing and swallowing what remained of Lugano's arm.

Unperturbed, Lumian calmly returned the straight sword to his Traveler's Bag.

Under Lugano's horrified gaze, Lumian conjured an entire almond pistachio cream thousand-layer cake and hurled it onto the floor beside Ludwig.

Ludwig's sprint slowed as he seemed to ponder which delicacy to indulge in first.

Ultimately, he turned his attention back to Lugano.

The sight of blood, flesh, and marrow infused with spiritual essence seemed to intoxicate him even further.

Capitalizing on Ludwig's momentary indecision, Lumian delved into his Traveler's Bag once more, extracting a fragment of Hisoka's corpse and tossing it aside.

Ludwig's gaze followed the offering, his lips instinctively moistening, yet he made no move to change course.

It seemed he found the offering beneath his tastes, too dirty to be his top choice.

Lumian systematically tossed out ingredients brimming with spiritual energy, one after the other, creating a barrier of tempting treats around Ludwig. Cream pancakes, fruit tarts, sandwiches oozing with cream, bouchée à la reine, chocolates infused with liquor, cookies, candied plums, éclairs, Charlotte desserts, and a myriad of other delicacies

formed a tempting ring around Ludwig, impeding his advance toward Lugano.

Turning to Lugano with a stern expression, Lumian's voice took on a commanding tone. "What are you waiting for? Stem the bleeding first!"

Startled, Lugano obeyed, his left palm emitting a faint glow as he applied pressure to the stump of his injured arm.

As Ludwig indulged in the feast laid out before him, his urgency waned. Though still concerned for Lugano, he no longer rushed forward.

In the final stages, Lumian threw out boxes of biscuits, sweets, beef jerky, and assorted provisions, encircling Ludwig with a haphazard yet effective "wall" of food.

Nearly all of Lumian's seven days' worth of rations for Ludwig had been deployed from his Traveler's Bag.

"What… what's the meaning of this?" Lugano, having successfully treated his wound and eased his pain, watched Lumian's actions with bewilderment. He couldn't fathom why his employer was so fixated on feeding Ludwig in the midst of their predicament.

"Sealing that fellow," Lumian replied calmly, his hands never ceasing their task.

"Sealing?" Lugano nearly doubted his hearing.

Isn't this too absurd?

Using food to seal a monster?

He couldn't recall ever encountering such a concept, not even in the most far-fetched novels on the market. No author would dream up such a peculiar method!

Wouldn't a conventional seal involve the use of spiritually potent materials to inscribe mystical symbols and patterns, followed by ritualistic magic or the employment of a mystical artifact?

What possible purpose could hurling food at the monster serve?

Lumian smiled and sighed.

"Once he's satiated, he won't have any appetite left for you or anyone else here.

"And there's enough food to keep him occupied until dawn, and possibly even beyond."

Lumian had devised this plan upon realizing that Ludwig's sole desire was to eat. Coupled with his behavior during the Dream Festival, Lumian was confident that Ludwig was now driven purely by his insatiable hunger—a unique trait exclusive to him in Tizamo.

In this scenario, as long as Ludwig's appetite was sated, he could remain confined within the suite, feasting without posing a threat to others.

What was the distinction between this and traditional sealing methods?

Of course, the success of this makeshift seal depended on the Dream Festival concluding before Ludwig depleted the seven days' worth of food.

Otherwise, Lumian's ability to hunt in the forest might not keep pace with Ludwig's voracious appetite.

Lugano's understanding dawned upon hearing Lumian's explanation.

Indeed, this method offered a practical means of temporarily restraining Ludwig.

Who said it couldn't be deemed a seal?

Understanding one's target's preferences and weaknesses allowed for the implementation of a seal without resorting to mysticism!

Observing Ludwig still attempting to approach the door amidst his feast, Lumian realized the creature's reluctance to part with Lugano. With a swift movement, he grasped Lugano's shoulder and teleported them both to a corner of the second-

floor stairwell in the police headquarters.

Ludwig briefly glanced at the vacant doorway before refocusing on his culinary conquest within the suite.

…

"Are you certain everything's under control?" Lugano inquired anxiously, the moment he exited the spirit world.

Lumian chuckled in response.

"As long as no Beyonder happens to stroll by the door, he won't abandon his feast."

Relieved, Lugano exhaled deeply, casting a rueful glance at his remaining arm. Thoughts swirled in his mind as he contemplated his future.

At least I'm still alive. As long as I'm alive…

In the future, I'll see if I can save up enough money to afford a mechanical arm from the Church of Steam. That might bolster my combat strength.

The Doctor's expertise could only do so much, as transplanting another's limb was beyond the realm of possibility.

Camus and Rhea, observing Lugano's bloody limb, furrowed their brows, recalling Louis Berry's ominous warning of a greater issue.

"What happened?" Camus inquired.

Lumian smiled.

"It's a complication caused by that big problem, but I've managed to seal it temporarily. Just remember, stay away from the Brieu Motel, especially the door on the second-floor suite."

Relieved to hear that Louis Berry had intervened, Camus assured Lugano,

"Thankfully, it's all just a dream. You'll be fine once you wake up."

"A dream?" Lugano was perplexed.

Lumian offered no further explanation, simply remarking, "Indeed, it's a dream. But remember, if you perish in the dream, you perish in reality too."

Amid Lugano's bafflement, Lumian redirected said to Camus and Rhea, "Let's make our way to Twanaku's house now."

His primary objective in investigating the Dream Festival was to locate Hisoka's gold and the item acquired from the Nois family's Demon. He intended to assess

any changes in their respective locations following the festival's commencement.

If nothing surfaced, Lumian planned to seek out Padre Cali at the Saint-Sien Cathedral.

The peculiar condition of "weakness in the depths of the Spirit Body" possessed by Padre Cali in reality set him apart from everyone else in Tizamo. This hinted at something distinctly special about the padre. Additionally, it was Padre Cali who had officially inaugurated the Dream Festival.

Camus hesitated, his silence suggesting he might have pressing matters to attend to.

In that moment, Rhea regarded Lumian with confusion, gesturing towards Lugano.

"Why is he still lucid?"

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Chapter 674 Manor

□□Upon hearing Rhea's question, Lumian snapped to his senses and turned to Lugano.

In his haste to save and "seal" Lugano, he had overlooked Lugano's condition!

Ever since this Doctor had gotten his injuries under control, he had been responding to Lumian's questions. He was lucid and rational, a stark contrast to the other participants in the Dream Festival.

It had to be known that even Ludwig, the monster himself, couldn't effectively control his appetite and had resorted to devouring humans!

Moreover, Lugano had never slept in Hisoka's house, nor had he entered this peculiar dream realm before!

Seeing Rhea, Camus, and his employer staring at him intently, Lugano, still grappling with the lingering pain, was utterly perplexed.

"Why wouldn't I be lucid?

"Aren't you all still in your right minds?"

Everyone seems to be in the same state. Why should I be the only one with an issue?

Lumian carefully observed Lugano's emotions and asked in a calm tone, "Have you ventured outside the motel recently?"

"I did. I assisted Ludwig in purchasing roasted meat and pastries made from palm tree cores," Lugano recalled.

Lumian smiled.

"Did you sleep anywhere other than the motel?"

"No, I wouldn't dare to engage with the women here." Lugano shook his head without hesitation.

He was evidently a little regretful about this, as there were numerous mixed-blood girls in Tizamo who possessed a different allure compared to those in the Northern Continent.

As the two men conversed, Camus and Rhea meticulously searched for any abnormalities in Lugano's body. However, apart from being sufficiently lucid and lacking excessive emotions and desires, Lugano appeared to be unaffected by the strange phenomenon.

Lumian looked at Lugano with a thoughtful smile and said, "We're being forced to participate in an event called the Dream Festival. Simply put, we're dreaming. We can do anything in this dream, but if we die here, we'll die in reality too.

"Aside from us, everyone in Tizamo is under the influence of intense emotions and desires, just like Ludwig.

"They're conscious—strictly speaking—but they've chosen to show their malice and express their long-suppressed desires. If we can subdue them, we might be able to communicate, but they'll instinctively try to deceive us."

Remembering how the café owner, Bunia, had immediately changed his attitude after being targeted by her arrow and begged for mercy, Rhea agreed with Louis Berry's judgment.

The Dream Festival participants weren't stupid or crazy. Their excessive desires and emotions were the main cause of their uncontrollable evil!

"I see…" Lugano finally understood.

Realizing what Rhea's question meant, he blurted out, "Why are we lucid and rational?"

After a pause, Lugano's voice lowered as he added, "W-why can I stay lucid and rational?"

Lumian smiled.

"We can stay lucid and rational because we entered this special dream before. We left marks and auras in certain places.

"As for you, I'm not sure why."

As he spoke, he watched Lugano's face closely, observing the change in his servant's expression.

Lugano said in a daze, his voice tinged with fear, "I don't know why this is happening either…"

Noticing that Lugano remained calm even after his issue was brought to light, Lumian seized the chance to glimpse into his servant's luck.

Currently amidst a bloody calamity, Lugano might fall victim to an ailment in the coming days… The first part makes sense, considering Ludwig has just eaten half his arm. But what does the second half imply? Could the Dream Festival span

several days? Impossible. If it truly lasted that long, Tizamo's predicament would have been discovered much earlier… Does this suggest that Lugano would succumb to an illness during the Dream Festival itself? An illness similar to death in the waking world, one that wouldn't be instantly cured even if he awakens and receives the Mass's blessing? Lumian quietly pondered the meaning behind Lugano's revealed fate.

Shifting his gaze to Camus and Rhea, he realized that they, too, would soon face a grim and bloody ordeal. If they failed to navigate it properly, they risked slipping further into peril.

As these thoughts swirled in Lumian's mind, he turned to Camus and Rhea and declared, "I'm taking my servant with us."

It wasn't an act of kindness or generosity. Rather, Lumian feared that leaving Lugano to his own devices, given his inexplicable lucidity and rationality, might trigger the abnormality within him and alter the course of the Dream Festival in unpredictable ways.

Better to keep him close at hand, where he could be monitored and any potential accidents prevented. If Lugano truly unleashed a dire problem, Lumian could always end his life first, eliminating any future complications.

Camus and Rhea exchanged disgruntled glances before conceding, "It's your call to make."

"We must hurry to Twanaku's house," Lumian reiterated his earlier proposal.

Camus's gaze drifted toward the cubicle where Kolobo lay hidden, a hint of hesitation in his voice as he asked, "Any idea where Captain Reaza and the others might be?"

"They were supposed to appear beside me when the Dream Festival began, but they were nowhere to be seen," Lumian admitted, recounting the situation honestly.

Perhaps the dream's correspondence to reality was imperfect. The location where each person entered this peculiar dreamscape might be influenced by factors like their understanding, the dream's state, where they had slept, and myriad other variables.

Lumian mused that if he hadn't maintained his lucidity and rationality, he might have awoken in the master bedroom of the Brieu Motel's suite.

"Should we try to locate them first?" Camus proposed, a note of uncertainty in his tone.

Lumian let out a wry chuckle.

"Why? To engage them in combat?"

Neither Reaza nor Maslow had ever slept in Hisoka's house before. The likelihood of them lacking self-control and succumbing to malice and base desires was high.

When the time came, Lumian might not possess the strength to control the pace and intensity of the battle against such formidable Beyonders as he did with ordinary folk, not without the risk of causing deaths.

Camus and Rhea lapsed into a simultaneous silence, neither keen on the prospect of a life-and-death struggle with their own teammates.

Just as Lumian was about to signal the two patrol team members to approach, Camus gritted his teeth as he declared, "There's somewhere I need to go before I head to Twanaku's house."

"And where might that be?" Lumian inquired, raising an eyebrow.

Camus replied in a deep voice, "Palm Manor."

Lumian chuckled.

"You wish to rescue Miss Amandina?"

Camus nodded firmly, a hint of embarrassment tinging his features.

"Yes, that's right."

"You needn't worry. This is merely a dream. If one is violated within the dream, they'll only experience a touch of hysteria upon waking. No substantial harm will befall them," Lumian stated matter-of-factly, his intention not to provoke Camus.

Camus's expression remained unwavering.

"I'm aware. But I fear she may not be able to cope with it in her dream state and might resort to drastic measures. It could lead to her demise."

Without waiting for Lumian's response, Camus spoke gravely, "You can proceed to Twanaku's house first. I'll make my way to Palm Manor and rendezvous with you later."

"By the time you're done, we might not be at Twanaku's house anymore," Rhea cautioned him.

Camus nodded gently.

"I've made this decision of my own accord. I'm prepared to bear any consequences that may follow."

Lumian locked eyes with Camus, remaining silent for a stretch.

Camus felt an indescribable pressure weighing upon him, his mind conjuring the tragic outcomes he might face, but he pursed his lips and refused to retract his suggestion.

After more than ten seconds of silence, his expression unchanged, Lumian finally spoke.

"Let us head to Palm Manor now."

Huh? Before Camus could react, Lumian's hand firmly grasped his shoulder.

Simultaneously, Lumian's other hand darted out, reaching for Rhea's arm.

Rhea's instinctive reaction was to dodge, but the memory of how Lugano had been transported flashed through her mind.

Her tense shoulders relaxed a fraction.

With Camus and Rhea securely in his grasp, Lumian shot Lugano a meaningful look.

Lugano, displaying a practiced ease, approached and latched onto a corner of Lumian's vest.

In the next second, Lumian's figure blurred, the haziness rapidly spreading to engulf Camus, Rhea, and Lugano.

As Rhea and Camus found themselves surrounded by layers of indescribable colors and formless objects, intense emotions surged within their hearts.

Could this be the spirit world?

Is this what teleportation feels like?

Was this how the great adventurer, Gehrman Sparrow, managed to appear before any pirate at a moment's notice?

Having witnessed Louis Berry's abrupt disappearance and subsequent return with his servant in tow, Camus and Rhea had speculated that this might be the famed teleportation ability that had become the stuff of legend across the Five Seas, thanks to Gehrman Sparrow's extraordinary exploits.

It seemed their suspicions had been right on the mark!

Matani's patrol team boasted numerous adventurers among its ranks, and Camus and Rhea were well-versed in the myriad rumors that circulated the Five Seas.

The instant they experienced teleportation firsthand, their bodies departed the dream's spirit world, rematerializing before a four-story beige edifice.

This was none other than the main building of Palm Manor.

In the blink of an eye, Lumian, Camus, Rhea, and Lugano had reached their destination.

The manor was awash with cries, screams, sinister laughter, and high-pitched singing.

Just over ten meters from the main building, near a garden shrubbery, a mixed-blood lady's maid lay pinned to the ground by a group of slaves, her clothes half-stripped as she cried out in desperation.

She struggled with all her might, but how could she hope to resist the adult men? She was utterly helpless, pinned down and at their mercy.

Witnessing this scene, the former Public Security Officer, Camus, instinctively yearned to intervene, but he quickly reminded himself that this was a dream. Such events wouldn't truly impact reality. At most, they would result in a certain degree of curable hysteria.

It would be a waste of time to stop it, and it would only serve to delay my search for Amandina. Moreover, it would be pointless… Camus warned himself, forcibly averting his gaze as he ascended the steps into the main building.

At that moment, Rhea, who had been silent for a couple of seconds, turned from facing the manor's main building.

"You guys head in first."

With her back to Lumian, Camus, and Lugano, she spoke in a nonchalant tone. Leaning forward slightly, she strode purposefully towards the bushes at the garden's edge, making her way to the mixed-blood lady's maid who was being violated by the slaves.

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Chapter 675 Evil

□□In a few swift strides, Rhea positioned herself behind the slaves, raised her right foot, and delivered a powerful kick.

With a resounding bang, the slave pressing down on the mixed-blood lady's maid was sent flying, landing unceremoniously in the bushes at the garden's edge.

The other three abruptly turned to face Rhea.

Before they could get a clear look at their assailant, Rhea followed up with a fluid roundhouse kick, knocking another one to the ground.

The remaining two, torn between greed, desire, and fear, took one look at Rhea and turned tail, fleeing to another part of the manor.

Rhea retracted her left foot and fixed a cold stare upon the two servants struggling to their feet. She raised her hunting bow, nocking an arrow with a smooth, practiced motion.

The two servants licked their lips in unison. Unwilling but fearful, they swiftly clambered over the bushes and vanished into the garden.

Only then did Rhea lower her gaze to the mixed-blood lady's maid, whose face was still streaked with tears and confusion.

"Are you all right?"

The mixed-blood lady's maid shook her head repeatedly. With trembling hands, she hastily tidied her half-torn dress and retrieved a dagger that had fallen beside her.

Seeing this, Rhea wasted no time.

"Find a secluded corner and hide until dawn."

With that, Rhea pivoted on her heel and prepared to dash back to where Louis Berry, Camus, and the others stood waiting at the door of the manor's main building.

As the mixed-blood lady's maid stood up, her expression darkened, and she raised the dagger clutched in her hand, plunging it towards Rhea's back.

Catching sight of the impending danger, Camus shouted, "Watch out!"

Though Rhea hadn't sensed the approaching threat, she instinctively heeded Camus's warning and reacted.

Surrendering to inertia, she fell forward and rolled to the side, narrowly evading the dagger's deadly path.

As she rolled, Rhea pivoted to face her attacker, eyes narrowing as she instinctively raised her bow, aiming at the mixed-blood lady's maid.

The mixed-blood lady's maid brandished her dagger, shouting in Intisian, her words laced with hatred, "Why can you join the patrol team, while I'm stuck as a mere lady's maid? Don't we both hail from the Southern Continent?

"Why? I even have Intisian blood coursing through my veins!"

Before she could complete her tirade, a crimson Fire Raven, its hue bordering on white, swooped in from nowhere, colliding with the steel dagger.

With a resounding clang, the dagger heated up, an explosive force wrenching it from the mixed-blood lady's maid's grasp, sending it flying several meters before clattering to the ground.

The mixed-blood lady's maid faltered, fear supplanting the hatred in her eyes.

Lumian, his black hair and green eyes striking, stood on the steps of the manor's main house, one hand casually tucked in his pocket. He called out, his voice carrying, "Where is Miss Amandina?"

Uh… A pang of embarrassment struck Camus.

In his haste to rescue Miss Amandina, he had acted with a distinct lack of professionalism!

He had been a guest at Palm Manor, but he had never been invited to visit Amandina's room upstairs. Consequently, he found himself unsure of which floor and room to search for her later.

If he were to search floor by floor, he would undoubtedly encounter countless obstacles amidst the current chaos.

The mixed-blood lady's maid's expression shifted, revealing a blatant desire and anticipation.

"She's sleeping in her room. Third floor, second room facing the rubber forest.

"Make haste. She's a vision of beauty, fragrant and pristine. Her figure is exquisite, her skin smooth as silk. She's a cut above the rest of us. Many a gentleman considers her their dream lover. Go, quickly!"

As she neared the end of her speech, the mixed-blood lady's maid gritted her teeth, her eyes alight with an illusory desire to witness something transpire.

Lugano's hair stood on end, a chill running down his spine as he confronted the stark malevolence of human nature.

Clap! Clap! Clap! Lumian shook his head, a smile playing on his lips as he applauded.

Rhea fell silent for a couple of seconds before rising to her feet and departing the area.

After a few steps, she paused, turning to regard the mixed-blood lady's maid. In a deep, solemn voice, she reiterated, "Find a secluded spot and hide until dawn."

With those parting words, Rhea turned away from the mixed-blood lady's maid and sprinted back to the steps at the main house's entrance.

Lumian averted his gaze and led the way through the open brown door.

As he, Camus, and the others entered, they were greeted by a startling sight in the living room. A middle-aged woman in a disheveled nightgown, her half-exposed body glistening with sweat and her black hair in disarray, sat astride a sturdy native slave. Her movements were intense, and she appeared utterly immersed, alternating between shouting and cursing. The native slave, clearly enjoying the experience, eagerly cooperated.

Near the staircase, a group of five or six servants and slaves, armed with an assortment of shotguns, rifles, and other weapons, intermittently fired bullets up the stairs. Occasional counterattacks emanated from the area leading to the second floor.

Camus stood frozen, his gaze fixed on the middle-aged woman's flushed face.

"You know her?" Lumian asked, a smile playing on his lips.

It was Rhea who replied, "She's Sir Petit's wife, Miss Amandina's mother, Madam Simona."

"I never imagined she would be like this…" Camus said, his voice low and somber.

Lumian smiled and applauded once more.

"Can't she indulge in her dreams?

"For the Dream Festival, this is something we should encourage. No one is being forced. How delightfully harmless."

Camus found himself momentarily at a loss for words.

Lumian then said to Rhea, "During the Dream Festival, there's a high likelihood that the person you save will also be a bad person and may even attack you."

Rhea fell silent for a few seconds before responding in a low voice, "Even if something like that happens again, I'll still save her."

Lumian dropped the subject and shifted his attention to Camus.

"Are you prepared to see the other side of Miss Amandina? Perhaps she will…"

Lumian left the sentence unfinished, instead casting a meaningful glance at Madam Simona, who was in the throes of fierce, foul-mouthed ecstasy.

Camus exhaled slowly, his voice resolute.

"I'm here to save her. It doesn't matter if she's good or bad, kind, malicious, chaste, or indulgent.

"After helping her find a safe hiding place and making sure she waits until dawn, we'll head to Twanaku's house."

I'm here to save her. It doesn't matter if she's good or bad, kind, malicious… Lumian quietly repeated the first half of the sentence, a smile playing on his lips as he regarded the servants and slaves attempting to occupy the staircase. He raised his voice, asking, "Has anyone seen Miss Amandina? Has she come downstairs?"

The servants and slaves turned their attention to Lumian and his companions, swiftly redirecting their firearms.

Lumian calmly extended his right hand, making a grabbing motion.

With this gesture, crimson flames, their hue bordering on white, ignited in the air, forming a curtain that Lumian seemed to snatch from the void.

With a deft grab and push, the fiery curtain abruptly split, transforming into Fire Birds that hurtled towards the shotguns, rifles, and revolvers before they could be properly aimed.

Amidst a series of muffled explosions, the guns dropped from the servants' and slaves' hands, clattering to the ground, damaged beyond use.

The servants and slaves themselves suffered only minor burns, their grip on their weapons faltering.

Since advancing to Reaper, Lumian's mastery over flames had grown. Even without the Lie earring, he could achieve this level of control.

Moreover, he hadn't unleashed his full power. He hadn't even summoned the blazing white flames in order to minimize the damage.

"Now, can we have a civilized conversation?" Lumian smiled at the servants and slaves.

Behind him, crimson Fire Ravens, their color nearly white, materialized, poised to strike at a moment's notice.

An Intisian valet, who seemed to hold some influence among the group, couldn't conceal his fear as he replied, "Amandina hasn't come down. Otherwise…"

He couldn't help but lick his lips.

"And who were you shooting at?" Lumian inquired.

"It's Petit, that bastard who deserves to rot in hell, and his butler, the one who's always wielding that damn whip!" A dark-skinned slave picked up the fallen firearm, only to discover that it was broken, just like everyone else's.

They had planned to retrieve more guns from another room on the first floor, but for now, they didn't dare make a move.

"Is that so?" Lumian nodded, a look of enlightenment crossing his features. "Carry on, then."

He turned around, leading the ten to twenty Fire Ravens that had gradually dispersed, and said to Camus and the others,

"Let's scale the side of the building to reach the third floor."

Teleportation wasn't an optimal option at this distance, not after having used it four times already.

Of course, since advancing to Reaper, Lumian could now perform 11 to 12 Spirit World Traversals without relying on the spirituality accumulated through his Ascetic abilities. It was a marked improvement from his previous limitations.

Camus and the others raised no objections. Lugano, however, trembled as he asked, "H-how am I supposed to climb?"

He swung the stump that was all that remained of his right arm.

Lumian glanced at him and said matter-of-factly, "Camus will assist you."

Me? Camus was momentarily taken aback before assessing his own skills and concluding that it was indeed feasible.

Before long, the four of them had ascended to the third floor, making use of the statues, decorations, metal pipes, and side balcony adorning the outer wall.

As soon as Camus pushed open the door leading to the corridor, he caught sight of a figure.

It was Amandina's personal maid, an Intisian lady's maid clad in a white cloth nightgown.

At that moment, the young lady's maid stood bathed in the dim moonlight, a bloody dagger clutched in her hand, her expression inscrutable.

Drip. Drip. The bright red blood from the dagger fell onto the corridor carpet, each drop a vivid splash of color.

Camus's heart clenched.

"What have you done?"

The lady's maid's face broke into a satisfied, carefree smile.

"I killed it. I've been annoyed by it for far too long!"

It? In Intisian, "she" and "it" were two entirely different words. Amidst his surprise, Camus followed the trail of dripping blood, his gaze falling upon Amandina's beloved pet dog, lying motionless at the door of the adjacent room.

Phew… Camus breathed a sigh of relief before asking in a deep, serious voice, "Where's Miss Amandina?"

The lady's maid's expression turned resentful.

"I'm looking for her too! She left an hour ago!"

An hour ago… Before the Dream Festival began? Camus pressed further, "Where did she go?"

The lady's maid, still holding the blood-stained dagger, replied with a contorted expression, "She went on a date with my Robert!"

Camus fell silent.

Lumian shook his head. Under the watchful eyes of the lady's maid, who yearned to kill but felt outnumbered, he swiftly searched the entire third floor with Rhea and the others, but found no trace of Amandina.

"Let's go." Lumian turned to Camus, his voice firm.

Camus had no choice but to concede defeat.

The four of them immediately teleported outside Hisoka's house.

Just as Lumian was about to proceed, he sensed something and looked up at the third floor.

A face appeared through the glass window of a room on the third floor.

The face was graced with a high nose bridge, piercing blue eyes, and thick black hair tied into a simple knot atop her head. Her brows exuded a youthful, vibrant aura.

Amandina!

It was said that Amandina had gone on a date with her fiancé, Robert!

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Chapter 676 You Intisians

□□Camus was stunned to find Amandina here. His astonishment far outweighed any joy he might have felt.

From the window above, Amandina noticed the four figures below. Her face twisted in alarm, and she disappeared into the house's shadowy interior.

Taken aback, Camus called out, "Don't be scared! We're here to keep you safe!"

While shouting, he raced up the stairs to the second floor of Twanaku's residence.

His visit to Palm Manor had confirmed Louis Berry's theory. The Dream Festival participants had lost control of their actions, driven by hidden malevolence and desires. Yet, their minds remained lucid, allowing for communication.

Camus couldn't be sure if the possessed individuals would misinterpret others' words. Furthermore, this wasn't true clarity of thought. They wouldn't realize they were dreaming, and the experience would fade upon waking.

Thump! Thump! Thump! Camus and Rhea charged into the building, taking the steps two at a time.

Behind the house, out of sight, a glass window set in wooden planks swung open. Amandina, clad in black hunting gear, nimbly climbed out. She used the wall's protrusions and crevices to swiftly descend to the ground.

As her feet touched the earth, she noticed a figure watching her from the side.

It was Lugano, his right arm ending in a bloody stump, his face marred with crimson stains. He looked a frightful mess.

Amandina's heart clenched. She pressed her back against a pillar supporting Twanaku's house, fists tightening as she shut her eyes.

In the same instant, Lugano's eyelids drooped, his mind growing hazy.

He collapsed to the ground, falling into a deep sleep where he lay.

Amandina's eyes snapped open, no longer using her power to force the battle-worn man into slumber.

Doing so would trap her in a profound sleep, able to act only in her Nightmare form, her body immobile. And the man wasn't alone!

Before Lugano could wake naturally, Amandina turned to flee, seeking a safe haven to conceal herself.

At that moment, she heard a smirking voice.

"So you're a Beyonder too."

Amandina instinctively glanced over and saw the adventurer, Louis Berry, standing before another wooden pillar supporting Twanaku's house, not far from her.

The handsome Louis Berry, with his dark hair and emerald eyes, had one hand in his pocket as he leaned against the pillar. His feet were crossed behind him, and his lips curled into a playful smile as he looked her way.

The dim crimson moonlight of the night lent him an air of enigmatic and sinister allure.

Amandina tightened her fists once more and closed her eyes.

However, her spiritual senses told her that Louis Berry had vanished in an instant.

She couldn't find the target and couldn't use her corresponding abilities.

Moments later, Amandina, with her heightened spiritual perception, cast her gaze towards the shadows on the ground floor of the house.

She sensed something stirring there.

At the same time, Amandina heard an illusory and ethereal voice.

"We mean you no harm.

"We're not affected by the Dream Festival."

Amandina, who was about to use her spiritual perception to lock onto the formless presence in the shadow, was taken aback.

Just then, Camus and Rhea ran to the corresponding window and called out to Amandina,

"We're here to protect you!"

"We have enough self-control."

After assessing the number and strength of the two sides, Amandina asked skeptically, "Why aren't you affected?"

As she spoke, she locked onto the formless entity in the shadow, believing it to be the strongest among the opposing group—the adventurer, Louis Berry. If she

discovered anything amiss and something went awry, controlling Louis Berry first would effectively increase her chances of escape.

Lumian's body emerged from the shadows.

He glanced at Lugano, who had regained consciousness and stood up, and inwardly praised Amandina's keen spiritual perception. Then, he smiled at Amandina and said, "Surely you've noticed that we've been entering and exiting this house frequently over the past few days?

"What about you? How are you able to maintain your normal self-control?"

Amandina glanced at the house beside her, no longer puzzled by Lumian and the others' ability to remain lucid and rational.

She pursed her lips and said, "Robert took me on a date to Twanaku's place. I spent half the night here."

Camus's heart ached as he blurted out, "Robert knows what's special about this place?"

Amandina nodded nimbly.

"He knows the Dream Festival very well."

"What's his relationship with Twanaku?" Lumian asked thoughtfully.

Amandina pondered for a moment.

"I don't know. At the very least, I haven't noticed any romantic tension between them or any interactions."

What do you mean by romantic tension? Lumian didn't directly inquire about Mr. Robert's knowledge of the Dream Festival. Instead, he asked something else.

"Are you a Beyonder of the Evernight pathway?"

Amandina blinked and hesitantly said, "In a way…"

Upstairs, Camus inquired with concern, "Where did you obtain the potion formula and the corresponding ingredients?"

As they conversed, various movements and shouts echoed from the plantations outside the town and throughout the town.

Amandina's eyes darted around as she grinned and said, "Can I choose not to answer?""What do you think?" Lumian smiled at her.

Amandina didn't back down. She raised her head slightly and stared into Lumian's eyes without flinching.

She noticed that his smile remained unchanged, and his emerald-green yet deep eyes remained emotionless.

After more than ten seconds, Amandina averted her gaze and tilted her head slightly.

"I obtained it in this dream."

Camus, who was on the third floor, was taken aback. "You obtained it during the Dream Festival?"

He could understand obtaining a potion formula during the Dream Festival. While knowledge gains could be replicated in reality, could Beyonder ingredients used to concoct potions be brought from the dream to reality?

Could it be that after consuming a potion during the Dream Festival, one could also remain a Beyonder upon waking?

This subverted much of mysticism's common sense!

Without waiting for Amandina's confirmation, Camus thought of a possibility.

He immediately asked Amandina, "Are you a Beyonder only in this dream?"

Amandina wanted to play dumb, but after glancing at Louis Berry, who was looking at her with a faint smile, she said gloomily, "It's the same in reality, but I don't have many chances to showcase it."

How is this possible? Camus gazed down at Amandina, suspecting that the mystical knowledge he had encountered since childhood was inaccurate.

He had considered the possibility that Amandina was lying, but he wasn't willing to doubt this girl who held a special place in his heart.

At that moment, Lumian spoke calmly to Amandina, his expression unperturbed, "You haven't consumed a potion, have you?"

Amandina's expression shifted slightly. She puffed up her cheeks and muttered, "Why are you still asking me if you already know…"

Haven't consumed a potion? Camus, Rhea, and Lugano were taken aback, but as they recalled their encounters, they gained a better understanding of Amandina's situation.

It's indeed a boon, but I'm not sure how it was accomplished… Lumian silently smiled as Camus nervously asked Amandina, "Which evil god deceived you?"

Amandina was bewildered. "Evil god? What evil god?"

Before Camus could explain, Lumian asked thoughtfully,

"How did you obtain these supernatural abilities?"

Amandina scoffed.

"Why should I tell you?"

In the next moment, she saw Louis Berry reveal a smile that inexplicably terrified her.

"It's—it's Robert," Amandina said with a shiver. "He took me into the forest outside and led me to a huge black stone. He asked me to place my hand on it."

"And then you became a Beyonder?" Lugano interrupted Amandina with surprise and curiosity, failing to abide by his duty as a servant.

Amandina shook her head.

"Then I fell asleep—in the dream. When I woke up, I had superpowers."

"Is Robert also a Beyonder? Did he obtain his powers through the same method?" Camus pressed.

Amandina let out a soft sigh and said, "He's a Beyonder, but I don't know if he obtained his abilities the same way. He brought me on a date here. Before entering this dream, he was already a Beyonder."

Black boulder… Lumian emerged from the ground floor of Hisoka's house and asked Amandina with a smile, "Where's Robert? He's not having a date with you here?"

Amandina's expression shifted between anger and amusement as she replied, "He wanted to visit his other lover before coming to me."

"He has another lover? Who?" Camus asked, suddenly angry.

Amandina's eyes darted around, and she hesitated for a moment with a strange expression.

"Padre Cali."

"Uh…" "Huh?" Camus, Rhea, and Lugano couldn't help but exclaim in shock and confusion.

Even someone as well-read as Lumian couldn't help but raise his eyebrows.

Amandina spread her hands and said, "He does like women, but he prefers men.

"He said he brought me into the dream to obtain superpowers because he felt guilty towards me. He was also grateful that I was willing to help him keep it a secret and not break off the engagement, continuing to go out with him, make out

with him, protecting his image even after knowing his other side."

At that moment, Camus and Rhea remained silent, but Lumian sensed the same meaning in their eyes.

You Intisians…

Amused, Lumian asked Amandina, "And you can accept that?"

Amandina pondered seriously. "Why not? As a marriage partner, Robert excels in status, wealth, strength, looks, and skills. In the Southern Continent, there aren't many better choices. Besides, we did have a beautiful relationship. He does love me, but he also loves Padre Cali."

Amandina smiled at Lumian and said, "He also promised me more freedom."

Upon hearing Amandina's response and looking at the youthful and beautiful girl, Camus, who was on the third floor, suddenly felt a pang of sorrow.

A certain beauty in his heart shattered.

Lumian glanced up at him and scoffed inwardly.

Hadn't he been mentally prepared to see the other side of Amandina? Amandina managed to express herself succinctly in a very self-controlled manner without demonstrating it.

Perhaps Amandina had deliberately said so much in front of Camus to prevent him from loving her out of pity.

Lumian turned to Amandina.

"In other words, Robert is currently in Saint-Sien Cathedral?"

"Yes." Amandina nodded.

Lumian tersely acknowledged her words and spoke in a commanding tone, "Then let's pay him and Padre Cali a 'visit.'"

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Chapter 677 Last Year’s Dream Festival

Chapter 677 Last Year's Dream Festival

Amandina hesitated for a few seconds before saying, "You've already cornered me. What choice do I have?"

Her eyes flickered with an inexplicable excitement and curiosity as she spoke.

Her words seemed to convey a different message: I didn't want to. I had no intention of doing so. You forced me to go to Saint-Sien Cathedral! Hurry, let's go!

Are you trying to "broaden your horizons?" Lumian criticized but didn't expose her.

He pointed at Hisoka's house and said, "Before heading to Saint-Sien Cathedral, let's check this place first."

Amandina tersely acknowledged his words.

"Are you trying to find the source of its uniqueness?

"Give up. I checked during the last Dream Festival and just now, but I found nothing."

As she spoke, she followed Lumian at a brisk pace, anticipating what this seemingly formidable adventurer would discover.

Lumian reached the second floor of Hisoka's house, where Camus and Rhea were already waiting.

Surveying every corner, Lumian casually asked Amandina, "Are you familiar with Twanaku?"

Amandina wasn't surprised by the question. Since she was searching for the source of the abnormality in Twanaku's residence, she couldn't avoid gaining a better understanding of his situation. She shook her head and said,

"I'm not familiar with him. I've only encountered him once or twice.

"I was just a child when he lived in Tizamo. Most of the time, I studied at the Iris Grammar School in Port Pylos. Later, he only returned to Tizamo two or three times a year—spending a week each time."

It was evident that Amandina had secretly learned about Twanaku. After all, she had only entered the special dream because she had slept in his house. She had even remained fully lucid during the Dream Festival.

Without waiting for Lumian to ask a new question, Amandina glanced at him and added, "Twanaku returns every year for the Dream Festival.

"Last year, during the Dream Festival, when Robert and I returned from the black stone, we noticed someone approaching. We hid behind giant trees on both sides of the path and saw that it was Twanaku."

Twanaku is indeed connected to the black boulder. There are even traces of him or marks formed by extreme emotions and desires there… Lumian turned to Camus, who was watching him and Amandina stroll around the second floor, and pondered for a moment.

"Which month did Twanaku's house burn down, killing all his family members?"

Without waiting for Camus's response, Amandina exclaimed excitedly, "I know, I know!"

Yes, I'm asking you. Do you think I don't know when Twanaku transmigrated? Lumian smiled at Amandina, signaling her to respond.

He had a clear and detailed understanding of Twanaku's matters on the surface. He had deliberately asked Camus to elicit Amandina's answer.

He wanted to see if she would lie and if she had any further information.

Amandina said smugly, "Late December. It should be a few days after the Dream Festival."

As far as they knew, the Twanaku family likely perished during the Dream Festival. Upon returning to reality, their fates began to unravel, and they were taken away by the fiery disaster. The question is, why did this house leave behind an abnormality? What happened to the Twanaku family back then, or what had they done? As the bestowed of the Inevitability domain, Lumian found a term that was very Inevitability-like to summarize the phenomenon of those who died for various reasons in the next three months after dying in the Dream Festival and returning to reality.

Reining in fate!

Of course, he couldn't be certain that death in the Dream Festival would lead to death in reality. However, judging from Amandina's expression and tone, Lumian believed that she thought the same.

After searching the second floor and finding no differences from reality, Lumian ascended the stairs to the third floor. Amandina followed closely, her excitement showing that she finally had a chance to do what a Beyonder should do.

Lumian glanced at her and casually asked, "What left an impression on you during last year's Dream Festival?"

Amandina's excited expression darkened, as if she had been reminded of something unpleasant.

She covered her mouth and nose. After a few seconds, she said, "Robert and I discovered numerous cruelly murdered individuals in the town and various plantations. Their stomachs were ripped open, and their internal organs were removed. They wore pained expressions, as if they had been tortured to death…"

"Serial Killer?" Camus, who had been listening intently to Louis Berry and Amandina's conversation, blurted out.

This reminded him of Twanaku.

Was this Desire Apostle venting his murderous desires during the Dream Festival to show restraint normally?

So that's how it is… Lumian roughly understood how Hisoka's advancement ritual had been completed.

Following the ritual, Hisoka had killed enough people in this realistic dream and devoured their internal organs. When he returned to reality, these people died one after another. From fate's perspective, they had indeed perished because of Hisoka's murder. This fulfilled the core requirements of the ritual. Hisoka only needed to truly devour a portion of the victims' internal organs before they were buried. He should be able to complete the ritual, consume the potion, and advance to Desire Apostle.

In reality, completing a series of murders and stealing a corpse's internal organs were two entirely different matters!

What puzzled Lumian was that according to Devilology, such an advancement ritual required a three-day interval between killings. Otherwise, it was easy to lose control. The maximum interval couldn't exceed nine days, or the ritual would reset.

Hisoka had clearly used the Dream Festival to complete all the killings in one night. When he returned to reality and the primitive tribe attacked, all the "condemned" people died on the same day. It didn't drag on until the next month. Lumian believed that it was due to the April Fool's prank. They had taken advantage of the chaos to send the deceased, whom the primitive tribe couldn't eliminate in time, to hell. This could be confirmed by the statements of the peripheral members of April Fool's.

In other words, the interval of no more than nine days was satisfied, but Lumian didn't know how Hisoka had achieved the criteria of exceeding three days.

Had he used the dream's uniqueness to avoid the three-day interval? When he killed someone in the dream, it hadn't been reflected in reality, so he wouldn't lose control so easily? As Lumian pondered Hisoka's advancement ritual, he circled the rooms on the third floor.

After searching the room where Twanaku slept, he smiled at Amandina and said, "Apart from the serial murders, what else did you encounter?"

Amandina pursed her lips and furrowed her brow. After a brief struggle, she grumbled, "If I cooperate, will I be awarded a medal when I return to reality?"

Her father, Petit, had once received the Legion of Honor medal from Intis, so he was made a knight.

Without waiting for Lumian's response, Amandina continued, "I also encountered a woman who seemed like a lunatic.

"Back then, I wanted to visit the Brieu Motel to see how the gentlemen and ladies hunting in Tizamo would react in such a dream. I was looking forward to seeing their other side.

"When I reached one of the rooms, I heard a few people singing a strange song. Then, the crazy woman appeared behind Robert and me. She remained lucid.

"She was quite beautiful, but she was very crazy. Back then, I was like a child with a new toy. I always wanted to test my abilities. I felt that with Robert's cooperation, I could easily deal with most Beyonders. One controlled, and the other attacked.

"In the end… she captured the two of us. Robert was knocked out, stripped naked, and hung from the bell tower with a bunch of mosquitoes released beside him. I-I was hung in a cesspit, descending bit by bit…"

At this point, Amandina appeared on the verge of vomiting.

In Tizamo, other than the Brieu Motel, Saint-Sien Cathedral, the police headquarters, and a few other places, no one used a flush toilet.

Camus couldn't help but sympathize with Amandina as he imagined such a scene.

Mad Lady? Were the ones singing the peripheral members of April Fool's who participated in the Tizamo prank? Lumian circled the third-floor rooms and smiled at Amandina.

"And then?"

Amandina took a deep breath and said, "She also asked me why I stayed lucid. After I told her about Robert and Padre Cali, she happily ran to Saint-Sien Cathedral and completely forgot about me. After that, I gradually escaped my predicament."

With a nod, Lumian replied, "Let's go to Saint-Sien Cathedral now."

He planned to consider using the Mystery Prying Glasses and the Eye of Truth in Hisoka's house in the dream after obtaining more information from Padre Cali and Robert.

"Alright." Amandina tried her best to appear less eager, but she really wanted to see how Robert, her fiancé, interacted with Padre Cali.

The five of them left Hisoka's house and hurried towards Saint-Sien Cathedral. Lumian didn't use teleportation because he didn't want to waste his spirituality. He couldn't carry anyone with him in his flaming spear form either.

Fortunately, Tizamo wasn't large. They quickly followed the shadows by the roadside and returned to the intersection where the Brieu Motel stood amidst various cries.

Lumian pointed at the Brieu Motel and warned Amandina, "Don't go to the second floor of the Brieu Motel. Trust me, it'll be even more terrifying than what that crazy woman put you through."

Amandina's eyes narrowed as she said, "Okay."

The five of them turned onto another street, passing through the Bunia café, the police headquarters, and a small square before arriving outside Saint-Sien Cathedral.

Lumian wasn't in a hurry to enter. He circled to the side, pried open a stained-glass window, and peered inside.

He and Amandina, who had gathered beside him, nearly went "blind."

In the cathedral's hall, a handful of naked men knelt before the Eternal Blazing Sun's altar. They were all from the Northern Continent, including Amandina's fiancé, Robert.

Padre Cali, also naked, paced back and forth between Robert and the others with an excited expression, reciting, "He walks in the light, He sheds warmth, He illuminates the world…"

With each line, Padre Cali seemed to grow more animated, exhilarated in various ways.

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Chapter 678 Absurd Orgy

□□Amandina scrutinized the naked preacher, Cali, from head to toe. Her gaze eventually settled on Robert, her fiancé, kneeling beside him.

The lad with brownish-yellow hair, his skin pale-white as if he had not been exposed to the sun for a long time, had abandoned his usual cold demeanor. He was equally excited, but he controlled himself and patiently waited for the padre to complete his preaching.

The other naked men grew increasingly restless, gradually stirring.

However, it was evident that they held Padre Cali in high esteem. Despite their disintegrating self-control, they refrained from directly initiating the orgy, only occasionally making small movements.

If God were watching, He would have incinerated all of them… As a believer in the Eternal Blazing Sun, Amandina subconsciously wanted to kneel to the side and bow her head in repentance. What a blasphemous scene!

Holding the open Sun Bible, Padre Cali continued to impart the teachings of the Eternal Blazing Sun to the naked men with an abnormally excited expression.

"God says, the sun shines justly upon everyone…"

During the preaching, Padre Cali's gaze frequently swept across Robert and the other purebreds of the Northern Continent, their faces, chests, and lower bodies. His expression revealed uncontrollable satisfaction, pleasure, and enjoyment.

Lumian had always felt that he was well-read. In the past, he had disrupted the Church's holy operations, but the scene before him still exceeded his imagination, leaving him momentarily dumbfounded.

Are the padres of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church among the most "outstanding" Intisians?

In an instant, information about Padre Cali and the observations of the past few days appeared in Lumian's mind.

He's a native of Port Pylos, possessing pure West Balam bloodline and a lowly native of the Southern Continent. Starting as a cathedral servant, he had seized the opportunity to change his fate. Subsequently, he had worked diligently and eventually became the padre of Tizamo Town.

He yearns for higher status and more recognition, especially from those hailing from the Northern Continent…

Such long-standing desires have distorted the desires of Padre Cali. Is he secretly targeting men from various countries in the Northern Continent, attempting to subdue them and gain his sought-after recognition?

Robert and the others are clearly relatively young. If Padre Cali had started doing such things a few years ago, they would still have been minors with immature minds. Tsk, you padres… As Lumian analyzed the current situation, he thought of his sister Aurore.

In Cordu, he had not liked entering the cathedral, attending Mass, or praying often. On the one hand, Aurore did not like it herself and set an example. On the other hand, Aurore had always been worried that Lumian, who was only twelve or thirteen years old at the beginning, would be alone with the clergyman in the cathedral. From time to time, she would use words like "Boys have to protect themselves" and "Many padres like boys."

Suppressing his sudden longing, Lumian looked at Padre Cali, who was still engrossed in his preaching. The more he preached, the more excited he became. Lumian felt that his analysis should be correct.

A lengthy holy sermon before a male orgy was clearly not something an ordinary person could come up with and put into practice. It was abnormally absurd.

However, considering that Padre Cali yearned for the Northern Continent gentlemen's recognition, especially given his identity as the Eternal Blazing Sun Church's padre, all of this became self-explanatory!

Poor Eternal Blazing Sun and Saint Sien. They have become an important prop for Padre Cali's performance art… Just as Lumian thought this, Padre Cali finally completed his "exciting" sermon.

He spread his arms and shouted, "Praise the Sun!"

Robert and the other lads, equally excited and naked, knelt on the ground, spread their arms, and sang in unison, "Praise the Sun! Praise His Grace!"

The Sun does not wish to be praised by you… His Grace… Yes, it aligns with the aspirations of Padre Cali for higher status. In this male orgy, he made all participants view him as an archbishop and preached to them… Finally, he would bestow the boon of God's holy spirit on these people? Lumian seemed to be able to imagine the ensuing scene.

Padre Cali turned around in satisfaction and solemnly placed the Bible back on the altar.

Then, he approached Robert, resembling an archbishop bestowing grace upon his believers.

The other men tangled with each other.

Camus, Rhea, and Lugano, who were observing the cathedral through another stained-glass window, were equally stunned.

In particular, Rhea felt as if her eyes, brain, and soul had been tainted despite all her tragic experiences.

Upon regaining her senses, Rhea's anger surged.

Beside her, Lumian recalled a detail. He lowered his voice and asked Amandina, "When did Robert become lovers with Padre Cali?"

Amandina retracted her corrupted gaze and pondered for a moment.

"More than a year after Padre Cali arrived in Tizamo, about three years ago."

Lumian frowned and asked, "Did they become lovers in reality, or during the Dream Festival?"

"Of course in reality," Amandina replied without hesitation.

Something's off… Padre Cali had been in Tizamo for over a year. He should have mellowed, turned restrained, and been devoid of excessive desires and emotions. Why was he still targeting Robert and the other lads? From the looks of it, there is something abnormal about Padre Cali, and this abnormality should have been related to the source of the Dream Festival. That is why he had declared its beginning… Just as Lumian thought this, he saw Rhea raise her bow angrily and aim it at the cathedral, where the scene was becoming increasingly unbearable and foul.

Almost simultaneously, the energetic Padre Cali turned his body.

Suddenly, Lumian, with one hand in his pocket, saw the native padre with dark brown skin, sunken eyes, and thin black hair. His naked figure was reflected in Lumian's eyes.

He felt a chilling aura emanating from Padre Cali's body, attempting to completely freeze and replace his spirit.

Wraith Possession!

So, Padre Cali possesses the ability to transform into a Wraith. It is no wonder that when I investigated his weaknesses, I realized that it only existed deep within the body, within the spirit… Heh heh, a Wraith preaching in the Eternal Blazing Sun cathedral and under the sunlight… Who would have thought such a thing would happen? Padre Cali's Wraith powers definitely had not come from drinking potions. They would definitely have been discovered and purified… A boon? Lumian came to a realization.

Relying on the strength of his Sequence 5 Spirit Body, Lumian struggled to wrestle control of his body from Padre Cali.

He was not in a hurry to activate the Blood Emperor's aura brand. Instead, he looked at Amandina and said with difficulty, word by word, "Let… me… and… Cali… enter a dream…"

Lumian knew that Amandina's ability to forcefully pull people into a dream could only be used one-on-one. However, Padre Cali was currently attached to him and entangled with his Spirit Body. Perhaps she could treat them as a unit.

As for whether Wraiths dreamed, Lumian did not know for now. After all, he still had a backup plan.

With a resounding crash, Rhea's arrow shattered the stained-

glass window, sending shards crashing to the ground.

The arrow, entwined with silver-white lightning, crossed a distance of more than ten meters, pierced the location where Padre Cali had been, and nailed it to the wooden table with the candlestick.

Amidst crackling lightning, the long wooden table shattered and collapsed to the ground, sending burning candles tumbling in all directions.

Robert, clearly taken aback by the sudden departure of Padre Cali, reacted. He opened his mouth and uttered strange words in a strange language.

Ooo! As if a cold wind from the Feysac Empire's extreme north blew, a blurry, strange, and inhuman figure materialized out of thin air and burrowed into Robert's body.

A layer of armor-like ice materialized on Robert's body, and a colossal, sharp, and crystalline frost scythe materialized in his hand.

Clutching the massive scythe, Robert sprinted toward Rhea, Camus, and the others.

Wherever he passed, the ground froze, and icicles materialized on the walls.

…

On the fourth floor of the Brieu Motel, in a room near the intersection, two figures emerged from behind the curtains as Lumian and his companions made their way to the street where Saint-Sien Cathedral stood.

One of them was a man with distinct Northern Continent features. His dark-green eyes stood out against his dark gray formal suit and black silk top hat. The other was a woman with delicate skin, exquisite facial features, and deep blue eyes. She wore a light-colored dress that allowed for easy movement and a feathered hat

adorned with pearls. They were the couple Lumian had seen moving into the Brieu Motel late at night.

They had arrived in Tizamo a mere ten minutes before the official Dream Festival began.

At that moment, the man and woman's eyes were clear, devoid of any excessive emotions or actions.

"The patrol team's sudden arrival in Tizamo is indeed because they discovered the problem here," the beautiful woman said in a deep voice, gazing out the window at the street below. "From the looks of it, they've also found a way to remain lucid and rational in this special dream."

The man's expression was cold as he nodded slightly and said, "But they don't know much yet. They're moving in the wrong direction."

"Let's get moving." The woman in the feathered hat led the way to the door.

The two of them descended the stairs swiftly, one after the other.

As they passed the second floor, the woman in the light-

colored dress suddenly stopped and whispered, "Do you hear something strange?"

The man in the half top hat listened intently for a few seconds before hearing faint chewing sounds coming from a room deep on the second floor.

The sound persisted without pause.

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Chapter 679 Spirit Medium

Seeing Robert, clad in ice armor and dragging a frost scythe, sprinting towards the stained-glass window facing him, Rhea, and Lugano, Camus immediately drew his custom-made revolver and aimed it ahead.

At that moment, his feet turned cold, and his body froze, causing his joints to become sluggish and his wrists to tremble.

From the corner of his eye, Camus observed that although Robert hadn't truly approached, the frost on the ground and the icicles on the wall had already reached him.

Within a radius of ten to twenty meters, the chill intensified, resembling the extreme north.

With a swoosh, Rhea shot another arrow entwined with silver lightning.

Robert didn't dodge or evade. Exerting strength in his arms, he swung the frosty scythe forward.

Clang!

The scythe knocked away the arrow, leaving behind a small amount of lightning that raced towards Robert's body.

Amidst the sizzling sounds, Robert felt numb for a moment before continuing to sprint towards Rhea and the others.

Camus was taken aback.

He wasn't surprised that Robert could control the frost scythe so effortlessly and create a considerable frozen domain. Instead, he was surprised that Robert had rushed up to him and was about to enter a five-meter range.

Doesn't he know about my Psychic Piercing ability?

Doesn't he realize that Psychic Piercing's effective range is five meters?

Could it be that he has never encountered or fought a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Arbiter pathway?

That's true, Camus thought. No one in the patrol team or the Admiral Guard knows that Robert and Miss Amandina are Beyonders. After obtaining Beyonder powers during the Dream Festival, they probably don't use them much in the outside

world. They can only unleash their full potential during the annual Dream Festival. There aren't many Beyonder enemies to choose from...

As these thoughts raced through Camus's mind, he seized the opportunity. As Robert stepped within five meters, his eyes lit up with brilliant lightning.

Psychic Piercing!

Two bolts of lightning shot out and pierced Robert's head.

Robert let out a blood-curdling scream and tumbled forward, writhing in pain.

He had tossed the frost scythe aside.

Rhea's arrow was once again nocked to the bowstring, instinctively following Robert's roll. Fury blazed in her eyes, erupting from within her body, and her muscles bulged with the surge of power.

Raging Blow.

This was the Raging Blow Rhea had accumulated through her anger.

It came from Sequence 8 Folk of Rage from the Sailor pathway. By releasing accumulated anger, her attack was greatly enhanced.

Rhea was currently at this Sequence, but the hunting bow in her hand was a powerful Beyonder item. It was a formidable weapon she had spent all her savings on before arriving in Tizamo. It was called Thunderclap Explosion and could be used for two years.

Soon, Robert ceased his tumbling, but he couldn't shake off the intense pain caused by Psychic Piercing. He froze in place for a moment.

Without hesitation, Rhea watched the arrow, engulfed in dazzling lightning, and released her grip on the bowstring.

The arrow shot out, but the lightning on it strangely split into two. One continued to ensnare the arrow, while the other darted to the right.

Wh-- Rhea's pupils dilated, unable to comprehend why such a thing had occurred.

Instinctively, she turned her head and followed the separated bolt of lightning to its destination.

Then, she saw Louis Berry leaning against the window, his eyes tightly shut as he slid down.

A few seconds ago, upon hearing Louis Berry's words, Amandina had locked onto him with a mix of confusion and excitement.

Since you said it, I won't stand on ceremony!

In her spiritual perception, Louis Berry's soul was intertwined with the sinister soul, fiercely resisting while using various parts of his body as a battlefield. However, the owner of the body was clearly at a disadvantage.

Amandina couldn't separate them under such circumstances.

She vaguely understood why Louis Berry had instructed her to lock onto the other party's head and entangled soul with her spirituality.

Lumian, who had Amandina use her abilities, stammered as he struggled to move his left hand in his pocket.

His left hand wasn't in his trouser pocket or shirt pocket, but in his Traveler's Bag.

After arriving outside Saint-Sien Cathedral and prying open the stained-glass window, Lumian had inserted his left hand into his Traveler's Bag, ready to retrieve a suitable mystical item at any moment.

He was preparing for the impending battle.

If this wasn't a dream, he would likely have his hand in his left shirt pocket--where Mr. K's finger was.

Before being fully controlled by the Wraith, Lumian relied on the strength of a Reaper's soul to struggle and retrieve a brooch from his Traveler's Bag.

It was the grayish-white, lightning-shaped brooch known as Fury of the Sea!

Lumian gripped the brooch tightly and observed Amandina leaning against the wall. She clenched her fists and closed her eyes.

His thoughts suddenly blurred, and his eyelids grew heavy.

He fell asleep and slowly slid down the wall.

Padre Cali fell silent in his body.

The Wraith appeared to be asleep as well. It was unknown if he would fall asleep on his own or if he was affected by the negative effect of now possessing a body.

Amandina opened her eyes and was delighted to see this. She wanted to praise herself.

With a crackling sound, the bolt of lightning detached from Rhea's arrow struck Lumian, transforming into numerous tiny electric serpents that slithered around him.

This was the downside of the Fury of the Sea brooch!

Even if Lumian only carried it, there was a high chance of being struck by lightning when he went out in the rain. And if he wore it without attacking anyone else, the likelihood of encountering such a thing would significantly increase.

Lumian believed that since the Fury of the Sea brooch had a chance of attracting lightning strikes on a rainy day, it held a special allure for lightning.

In such a situation, although it wasn't raining, what if there was another source of lightning nearby? What would happen?

There was a high chance that it would attract a portion of someone else's lightning!

Stimulated by the pain of the electric shock, Lumian, no longer affected by the Nightmare ability, snapped out of his dream. He regained his senses, but his body remained numb.

He experienced this, as did Padre Cali.

As soon as the Wraith regained consciousness, he instinctively detached from Lumian's body to distance himself from the harm of the electric current.

His face materialized on the nearest pane of glass, his form indistinct.

Seizing the moment, Lumian donned the grayish-white, lightning-shaped brooch and retrieved his revolver from his Traveler's Bag.

He raised his right hand, aiming at Wraith Cali, who remained in a daze. The Wraith's various colors reflected in Lumian's determined eyes.

The pallor rapidly expanded in Lumian's line of sight.

Bang!

Lumian calmly pulled the trigger, firing a yellow bullet.

As he did so, silver-white lightning flickered on the Fury of the Sea brooch, instantly entering the bullet and wrapping around its surface.

This was one of the brooch's abilities. It could grant the wearer an Electric Shock effect with every strike!

After temporarily losing the Pride Armor, this had become one of Lumian's most effective methods against soul-type creatures.

The yellow bullet, engulfed in silver-white lightning, struck the stained glass, shattering it and sending tiny electric currents in all directions.

However, it missed Padre Cali. As Lumian pulled the trigger, the Wraith vanished from the glass and instantly leaped onto the glass-like surface of the crystal

chandelier high above the cathedral.

Mirror Blink!

On the other side, Rhea's arrow struck Robert with precision, emitting a resounding bang like a heavy object colliding.

Crack!

The ice armor covering Robert's body instantly cracked, shattering into fragments that fell to the ground.

Under the assault of crackling electric serpents, the blurry shadow attached to his body broke free and vanished into the void.

With the ice armor shielding him from most of the damage, Robert remained relatively unaffected. However, his chest tightened, and his body briefly went numb.

At that moment, he regretted not wearing clothes. The various ingredients needed for his spirit channeling were hidden in his clothes, such as Full Moon Essence Oil or Corpse Incense Medication.

There were very few spirits that could allow him to communicate safely without the use of materials. The one just now was the most powerful.

Seeing Camus's special revolver and Rhea's arrows aimed at him, Robert grew anxious. He thought of a spirit channeling method that could be completed under such circumstances.

Frowning and fearing the pain, he bit the tip of his tongue.

Pfft!

He spat out the blood from the tip of his tongue mixed with his saliva, emitting a strange sound from his throat.

A pair of weathered, stone-like hands reached out from beneath the cathedral's stone bricks, seized Robert's body, and pulled him underground.

At some point in time, the ground had softened like a swamp, and the blood in the air abruptly vanished.

Camus's bullets and Rhea's arrows arrived one after another, but they only caused sparks on the stone bricks on the ground.

Spirit Medium? Camus used this opportunity to revise his judgment of Robert's pathway and Sequence.

He's actually not from the same pathway as Miss Amandina?

Hadn't he also obtained his superpowers from the black boulder?

Camus hastily took a few steps back, retrieved a cartridge bag, and began reloading the revolver.

As a member of Matani's authorities, obtaining Beyonder bullets with different effects was relatively easy, even though the patrol team wasn't wealthy or had much accumulation. After all, there was the Eternal Blazing Sun Church, the God of Steam and Machinery Church, the Church of Earth Mother, and numerous adventurers coming and going. Furthermore, the patrol team needed to be vigilant against certain branches of the Rose School of Thought and the Numinous Episcopate. They had to make targeted preparations.

Camus swiftly inserted the golden Purifying Bullets into the revolver's cylinder and snapped it shut.

At that moment, Padre Cali, who had leaped onto another stained glass window, reappeared.

He opened his mouth and emitted a piercing shriek that harmed one's eardrums and Spirit Body.

"Ah!"

Wraith Shriek!

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Chapter 680 Combat Experience

□□Camus, who had just loaded the Purifying Bullets into his revolver cylinder, heard a sharp sound of static in his mind.

Before his eyes, the world seemed to separate from him, a chunk of transparent glass forming a barrier between him and reality. Under the Wraith's Shriek, cracks appeared on the glass, extending into the Spirit Body.

A faint shattering sound reverberated in the ears of Lumian, Rhea, Lugano, Amandina, Robert, who had just crawled out of the ground near the altar, and the other naked men frantically dodging. It brought sharp pain to their eardrums, blood to their noses, and agony from the depths of their souls.

Almost everyone froze in place, like fragile porcelain caught in an invisible storm.

The naked men, who appeared ordinary, fainted without a sound. Blood seeped from their eyes, nostrils, mouths, ears, and skin. However, Lumian, who had advanced to Sequence 5 Reaper, suffered the least damage and recovered the fastest.

Thin ice crystal arrows shot at him, their arrowheads flickering with a cold light.

In an instant, Lumian made a decision.

He didn't transform into a shadow creature or enter the shadows to dodge the damage, nor did he attempt to duck.

Instead, blazing white flames ignited over his body.

He transformed into a burning-white spear and hurled himself towards the stained-glass window closer to the door, facing the ice crystal arrows.

Padre Cali, with his dark brown skin and sinister expression, stood there.

Amandina was the second to recover from the Wraith's Shriek. She witnessed the majestic blazing-white flaming spear collide with the ice crystal arrows hurtling towards them.

Silently, a portion of the ice crystal arrows facing the blazing-white flaming spear evaporated into sizzling white gas, while the surrounding ones quickly melted and turned to steam.

White mist caused by water steam filled the air. Although the blazing white flaming spear had dimmed significantly and stopped burning violently, it still

pierced through and headed straight for the stained glass that revealed Padre Cali's figure.

Similar ice crystal arrows pierced through the white mist, striking Amandina, Camus, Rhea, and Lugano. However, they either melted or shrunk significantly, reducing their speed.

Amandina and Camus, who had just escaped the Wraith's Shriek, easily dodged. Although Rhea and Lugano couldn't react in time and were hit by the ice crystal arrows, they only felt a slight pain, as if a child had hit them with a snowball. It was a little painful, but mostly wet and cold.

They seized the opportunity to snap out of their daze, almost at the same time as Robert at the altar.

Crack!

The blazing-white flaming spear struck the stained glass, shattering it into countless pieces. However, Padre Cali had already leaped onto the window that Lumian had pried open, narrowly escaping the attack.

As the flames of the burning white spear dissipated, Lumian's figure emerged from the fading light.

Without hesitation, he ignited white flames once more, transforming into a majestic spear that shot towards the window where Padre Cali had appeared, determined to pursue his enemy.

He deliberately refrained from teleporting and repeatedly transformed into a flaming spear, hoping to lull Padre Cali into overlooking such possibilities. Then, at a critical moment, he would unexpectedly appear beside him and use the Spell of Harrumph, catching the Wraith off guard.

Otherwise, it would be challenging to catch a Wraith that could constantly jump through mirrored objects, using them as portals to evade capture.

Furthermore, Lumian knew that Wraiths could be considered spirit world creatures to a certain extent. They could also use the spirit world to complete teleportation, although they couldn't compare to spirit world creatures specialized in this area. Nevertheless, it wasn't an ability to be underestimated.

As the fireball spear hurtled toward the window Lumian had pried open, Robert rolled to the side of the altar where their clothes were, intending to retrieve the ingredients used for spirit channeling.

Swoosh!

An arrow pierced the stone bricks in front of him, forcing him to change the direction of his roll at the last moment, narrowly avoiding the projectile.

As soon as Rhea regained her composure, she aimed at Robert and launched an attack.

Both she and Camus believed that Louis Berry could handle Padre Cali on his own, so their mission was to restrain Robert and capture this key figure, preventing him from interfering in the battle.

As a gunshot rang out, Padre Cali's figure vanished from the stained-glass window, leaving no trace of his presence.

The eyes of Amandina, who was nearby, reflected the image of the naked fallen padre.

Amandina wanted to resist, but her body quickly turned cold, gradually defying her will as an unknown force took control of her actions.

Amidst the sloshing sounds, Lumian's blazing-white flaming spear pierced through the stained glass and landed outside the cathedral, three to four meters away from Amandina, its heat radiating in the cool night air.

As the flames dissipated, Lumian appeared, clad in a golden straw hat, a white shirt, and a black vest.

At that moment, Amandina's hands had already "involuntarily" risen. The corners of her beautiful face curled into a sinister and smug smile.

Come on!

Attack me!

Amandina would be the first to be injured and die. If the body can't protect me, I can still jump and shift positions in time!

Padre Cali was wary of Amandina's ability to forcefully pull people into dreams, a power that could easily turn the tide of battle. This time, he chose to possess her instead of Louis Berry, an enemy at a higher Sequence, hoping to use her as a shield against Lumian's attacks.

As Padre Cali manipulated Amandina's body with a sinister and smug smile, he saw Louis Berry's lips curve into a radiant smile.

As a Wraith, Padre Cali had a strong spiritual premonition, and he suddenly sensed extreme danger.

"Ha!"

A pale-yellow light burst forth from Lumian's laughter and landed on Amandina, who stood three to four meters away, enveloping her spirit and Padre Cali, who couldn't use Mirror Blink in time.

Lumian honestly found it a pleasant surprise.

You know about Nightmare's abilities, but don't you know how to guard against the Spell of Harrumph?

Oh, you really don't. You don't know this ability, nor do you know that I'm capable of it.

However, as a Wraith, you can continuously "mirror- jump," yet you insist on attaching yourself to one of my teammates and remain within a few meters of me. What kind of belief is this?

Don't you have enough combat experience?

Even if you didn't know the Spell of Harrumph, you have to guard against abilities like Psychic Piercing!

Oh, you think Camus is far away, so there's no need to worry about it. As a Sequence 5 of the Hunter pathway, how would I know this? Are you hoping to use me to quickly kill Amandina?

Haven't you considered the existence of mystical items?

My original plan was if I failed to finish you off after using teleportation to deliver the Spell of Harrumph and Cull, I would feign a strategic retreat and find a small space to set up the Bottle of Fiction. Then, when you caught up, I would fight you in a cramped and sealed space, just like how I dealt with Hisoka back then. To my surprise, you delivered yourself to me…

As Lumian criticized wildly, Padre Cali and Amandina fainted and collapsed to the ground.

Had it been during his battle with Hisoka some time ago, Lumian would have hastened to follow through with the subsequent steps. This was because the Spell of Harrumph couldn't render a Sequence 5 enemy unconscious for long. However, now that he had advanced to Sequence 5, his Spell of Harrumph had become significantly stronger. The time he could control a Wraith had increased, although it was still limited to a few seconds.

Lumian retrieved a few special bullets from his Traveler's Bag. They had been purchased through Camus from the patrol team.

Two Exorcism and two Purification Bullets, both golden in color.

Lumian swiftly loaded the four bullets into the cylinder of his revolver and aimed at Amandina, who lay on the ground.

Catching sight of this from the corner of his eye, Camus jumped in fright and shouted, "What are you doing?"

"Saving her," Lumian replied calmly.

Then, he pulled the trigger.

Bang!

The golden Exorcism Bullet struck Amandina's shoulder, causing her to bleed and emit a golden sunlight.

Amandina woke up in pain, and the apparition of Padre Cali detached from her body, his face warped under the "sunlight."

Originally, with the strength of the Exorcism Bullets, it would have been impossible to expel a Wraith from the victim's body in an instant. However, Padre Cali was unconscious and unable to react effectively.

Lumian raised his gun, his eyes reflecting the color on the surface of Padre Cali's Spirit Body. He locked onto the pallor that had become evident.

Bang!

A golden Purifying Bullet, imbued with Cull's power, struck the Wraith's forehead.

The apparition of Padre Cali froze as he "saw" the bullet shatter on its own, transforming into balls of golden holy flames that spread throughout his body, igniting dust and his soul.

The bright, sun-like golden flames swiftly enveloped Padre Cali, causing him to let out a tragic scream.

This wasn't a Wraith Shriek, but it still made everyone's heads and ears hurt.

Lumian endured these sensations and calmly said to Amandina,

"Drag him into a dream and inquire about the source of the Dream Festival."

Padre Cali had already been subjected to Cull and was severely weakened, teetering on the brink of true death. Amandina could effectively restrain him!

"But…" Amandina's shoulder and head ached, but she didn't dare complain when she saw Louis Berry's cold and calm expression.

Lumian turned to Lugano and said, "Treat her gunshot wound."

"Alright." Lugano winced from the pain in his eardrums, but he still rushed over.

At that moment, Padre Cali, purified by the Cull, instinctively withdrew from his Wraith state and transformed back into a human to escape the ongoing damage.

Seeing this, Amandina took a deep breath, clenched her fists, and closed her eyes.

She and Padre Cali entered the dream at the same time.

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Chapter 681 Tomb

□□Robert rejoiced that the two patrol team members dealing with him had also been affected by Padre Cali's scream.

He didn't know what had happened to his lover, nor could he confirm it. Enduring the swelling in his head and the pain in his eardrums, he rushed towards the altar.

Pfft!

Rhea's arrow struck the pile of clothes, but that wasn't Robert's destination—it was quite a distance away.

After landing on the ground, he rolled and hid behind the altar.

Rhea drew the bowstring again, but she didn't release the arrow immediately.

Robert's body was completely blocked by the altar, making it impossible for her to aim. As a devout believer of the Eternal Blazing Sun, it was also impossible for her to use the hunting bow's unique abilities together with Raging Blow to directly shatter the altar.

Witnessing this, Camus, knowing his revolver's power was insufficient, leaped over the shattered stained-glass window and sprinted towards the altar.

After a brief moment of hesitation, Rhea raised her hunting bow and shot an arrow wrapped in lightning into the air.

The arrow flew high into the air before swiftly descending, bypassing the altar's obstruction and landing behind it.

Since she hadn't been able to aim properly, the arrow grazed Robert's body and struck a crevice between two stone slabs. A sizzling electric current dissipated, creeping over Robert's body and temporarily paralyzing him.

After breaking free, Robert abandoned the idea of retrieving his spirit channeling ingredients. He had no intention of saving his lover, Padre Cali.

He planned to bite the tip of his tongue again and complete the spirit channeling. With the special ability of the natural spirit, he could escape back to his plantation, where he still had plenty of spirituality-rich ingredients for backup.

At that moment, from the corner of his eye, he caught sight of Camus's light-colored pants and leather shoes with holes. He felt a whip formed by electric currents appear in his mind.

The whip struck his soul,

and Robert, crouched behind the altar, felt his knees buckle, and he collapsed, trembling as extreme numbness and pain surged through him simultaneously.

Whip of Pain!

Interrogator's Whip of Pain!

Camus rushed to Robert's side, leaned down, and delivered a left hook—one that more or less bore a personal grudge.

Bang!

Camus, skilled in interrogation techniques, inflicted pain on Robert without going overboard. Robert fainted, yet suffered no substantial harm.

After restraining Robert, Camus glanced at the naked man and selected nearby clothes to cover his private parts.

He then picked up Robert and returned to where Lumian and the others were.

At that moment, Lugano had already retrieved the bullet that had struck Amandina's shoulder, allowing the wound to contract and heal.

…

Padre Cali was dreaming of the interior of Saint-Sien Cathedral.

Dressed in a white robe with golden threads, he knelt before the altar, muttering with a pained expression, as if repenting.

Amandina, clad in a black hunting suit, approached Padre Cali down the aisle between the pews. Remembering Louis Berry's instructions, she asked, "What's the origin of this special dream?"

Padre Cali looked up, his face contorted as he replied, "That… that strange tomb."

"Tomb?" Amandina suspected the Dream Festival she had just attended was a sham.

What tomb?

Suddenly, a flash of inspiration flickered.

"That colossal, black boulder?"

It's actually a tomb?

Padre Cali nodded.

"Yes."

It's really a tomb… Intrigued, Amandina asked proactively, "Whose tomb is that? Why is it so special?"

Padre Cali remained kneeling, shaking his head.

"I don't know. Even the gravekeepers don't know. They only know their mission is to guard that strange ancient tomb."

"Gravekeepers? Who are they?" The more Amandina asked, the more she felt she didn't know about the Dream Festival.

Padre Cali looked up at Amandina and said, "The elders of the forest tribe."

"I see…" Amandina's mind raced with questions. She picked one and asked, "Did you take Robert to Twanaku's house to sleep and allow him to maintain his lucidity? Then, you took him to the ancient tomb where he obtained superpowers?"

"Yes." Padre Cali lowered his head, facing the altar, his voice laced with pain. "I'm sinful."

Just as I thought… Amandina inquired further, "How did you know you could obtain superpowers there? And how did you maintain lucidity? You've only been in Tizamo for about five years, and I grew up here," Amandina inquired further.

Blood vessels bulged from Padre Cali's neck. "Twanaku, Twanaku, bewitched me."

"He used his body to tempt you?" Amandina suddenly felt a surge of excitement.

Padre Cali was taken aback.

"He saw through my desire for status and recognition and gradually demonstrated his abilities. He also told me there was a way for me to quickly and easily obtain strength. And with great strength, I could do more for the Church and receive more rewards and recognition… That demon!"

Amandina asked in disappointment, "You were bewitched just like that?"

Padre Cali nodded slowly. "That's right. Twanaku needed someone to help him monitor the changes in the dream and host the Dream Festival after he left Tizamo. First, he got me to sleep at his house. Then, during the Dream Festival, he took me to that strange ancient tomb."

"Did you also obtain superpowers by touching that tomb?" Amandina asked casually.

Padre Cali shook his head again. "No, Twanaku opened a crack in the tomb and let me reach in…"

"What did you touch?" Amandina couldn't help but urge upon seeing Padre Cali's pause.

"I touched a hand—a cold hand without temperature. Then, I fainted. When I woke up, I had superpowers. I did it three more times during the subsequent Dream Festivals, eventually becoming a Wraith." Padre Cali recalled the situation, his face filled with uncontrollable fear—both of the cold hand and the ease with which he had obtained superpowers.

"The hand of the corpse in the tomb?" Amandina quickly reviewed what Padre Cali had said and thought of a problem. "Didn't you say there were gravekeepers? Why weren't we stopped when Robert and I went?"

Padre Cali's voice deepened.

"People who have lived in Tizamo for a long time often have a projection formed by suppressed emotions and desires in this special dream. They usually hide in the chaotic area brought by the tomb, at the edge of the dream. They watch over the ancient tomb with the gravekeepers to protect it from others.

"When the Dream Festival begins, these projections will return to their true forms, forming complete Dream Festival participants who can no longer suppress their emotions and desires. As for the gravekeepers, it's unknown where they go."

Strange… Amandina was puzzled by the gravekeepers' whereabouts. She was a little worried.

After a moment of contemplation, she asked with concern, "Do I have a projection of emotions and desires in this dream?"

Padre Cali shook his head.

"No. You don't spend enough time in Tizamo every year. Even for those who originally formed a dream projection, once they leave this place long enough and stop suppressing themselves, the corresponding projection will gradually fade until it disappears.

"Those who can remain lucid in this dream will have their corresponding projections gradually dissipate over time. details."

"However, this lucidity isn't absolute. After the Dream Festival begins, everyone will have a tendency to flaunt their emotions and desires—including those who maintain their lucidity. However, they won't completely lose control like those who have fused with their dream self. They can continue restraining themselves like normal, their desires revealed in some details."

Amandina recalled her performance during the two Dream Festivals and revealed a look of enlightenment.

Initially, she believed that because this place was a dream, as long as no one died, it was equivalent to a game. That was why she appeared more self-centered and unrestrained than in reality. She didn't expect this to come from the effect of the Dream Festival.

Thankfully, I've always had self-control… Amandina had ticked off most of the questions that Louis Berry wanted clarified, leaving only those that the Padre Cali himself wasn't aware of. Thus, she changed the subject.

"You've already become a Wraith, yet you still dare to preach and host Mass…

"Aren't you concerned that God might notice you and unleash His wrath upon you, purifying you into ashes?"

Being in the Southern Continent, Amandina knew the power of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church better than many gentlemen and ladies in Trier. She had no doubts about the existence of God.

Moreover, over the past year, she had been diligently obtaining mysticism knowledge from Robert and the various sources she could come into contact with. She knew that the Rose School of Thought, the key characters of various terrifying rumors, was renowned for its numerous Wraiths, and Wraiths were most afraid of sunlight that came with purification.

Padre Cali sighed and said, "I had such concerns, but Twanaku told me he had a way to help me hide a Wraith's power. Unless God watches this place personally, I won't be discovered."

"What is it?" Amandina asked curiously.

Padre Cali replied truthfully, "After touching the corpse in the tomb and obtaining superpowers, don't rush to leave. Touch the tomb itself again, the black boulder.

"This concealed all my superpowers. The effect will last for more than a year."

That's possible? What would happen if I touched the black boulder and then touched the corpse's hand? Amandina pondered for a moment and asked a question of personal concern, "How did you entice Robert? Why did he become your lover?"

Amandina sized him up but couldn't find anything about Padre Cali that attracted Robert, other than his strength.

Could love truly be blind?

Padre Cali fell silent for a moment before saying, "I ignited his desires, dismantling his self-control."

"You've never displayed such abilities…" Amandina hadn't noticed Padre Cali arousing any desires in the battle before.

Padre Cali's voice was once again tinged with pain. "I'm sinful. I'm praying to the Demon Twanaku mentioned…"

Before Padre Cali could finish, the entire dream suddenly trembled and collapsed inch by inch.

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Chapter 682 Cull

Unable to control the dream anymore, Amandina opened her eyes and woke up.

Beside her, Padre Cali snapped out of his slumber, his human form once again becoming hazy and indistinct.

Instinctively, he transformed into a Wraith, as if losing all restraint. Stiff black hair even sprouted from his body.

Reflected in Padre Cali's eyes was Lumian's figure—Louis Berry, with his black hair, green eyes, and golden straw hat, holding a revolver aimed directly at the Wraith's forehead.

Bang!

Lumian smiled and pulled the trigger, a golden Purifying Bullet exploding from the muzzle and instantly heading straight for the pallor in the Wraith's forehead.

Cull!

Simultaneously, Lumian waved his empty left hand at Padre Cali, as if to say, "Bye, you won't be missed!"

The Purifying Bullet exploded, and golden flames instantly ignited the ethereal Padre Cali's entire body.

Padre Cali couldn't even scream, his agonized thoughts manifesting as an invisible gale sweeping outwards.

Lumian endured the backlash, watching with a grim smile as the enemy was consumed by the purifying flames, reduced to scattered ashes.

Lumian felt his Reaper potion digest a little more.

Using Cull to reap a powerful foe's life was a core principle for Reapers—the higher their Sequence and strength, the more potent the acting effect.

With the addition of Cull, the relatively ordinary and common Purifying Bullet ended the life of a Wraith with just two strikes.

Lumian found it inexplicably amusing to witness the true incineration of the Padre Cali.

Why do I always encounter fallen Eternal Blazing Sun padres and cleanse and purify them?

Is this repayment for my past faith?

As these thoughts raced through his mind, Lumian glanced at the risen Amandina and asked with a smile, "What did he say?"

Amandina's first reaction was to check the wound on her shoulder. She exclaimed, "It's completely healed, not a trace left?"

If it weren't for her torn clothes and sore shoulder, she would have imagined herself to be uninjured.

Miss Amandina, don't act as if you've never seen the world. Although you're a believer in the Eternal Blazing Sun and won't seek treatment from the clergyman of the Church of Earth Mother unless you are particularly ill, there are many Feynapotterians in Matani. Haven't you come into close contact with them? Lumian criticized her and looked at Amandina coldly without responding.

Lugano, on the other hand, saw the beautiful girl's reaction and explained smugly,

"That's the power of a Doctor from the Planter pathway."

Amandina expressed her gratitude, then recounted her conversation with Padre Cali while massaging her shoulder to relieve the lingering sourness.

At the end, she spat at the spot where his ashes had fallen.

"He became the Demon's mouthpiece, using its power to violate Robert and the others.

"Luckily, he preferred men. Otherwise…"

Recalling how she had frequented Saint-Sien Cathedral over the years and had been a girl with limited knowledge, far from adulthood, Amandina shuddered inwardly. She sympathized with Robert and the others, but she also felt fortunate.

Lumian had another question in mind.

Could Hisoka's Wraith abilities also originate from the Dream Festival and the strange black tomb, rather than a direct boon from the Mother Tree of Desire?

That would explain a few things better.

As far as Lumian knew, when evil god believers prayed for boons, they needed to perform a ritual and offer sacrifices. The higher the level of the boon they prayed for, the higher the requirement for the sacrifice, and the larger the ritual.

As a member of Port Pylos's patrol team, Hisoka could cover up one or two sacrifices, but it was difficult to suppress all the sacrificial incidents. It was just like how Hisoka had only completed one serial murder case in Port Pylos.

Previously, Lumian had believed that he had relied on Mad Lady's help to complete the sacrificial rituals in the Southern Continent's even more chaotic places. But now, it seemed that there was no need for such trouble. He just needed to touch the cold corpse once a year during the Dream Festival.

Hisoka and Padre Cali have participated in at least five Dream Festivals and have become Wraiths for some time, but they haven't made a breakthrough since then… Is this because the cold corpse can only bestow a boon up to Sequence 5? Did Hisoka obtain the large amount of gold and something from the Nois family's Demon to wait for this year's Dream Festival to complete the corresponding matters and obtain a higher boon? Lumian turned to Robert, who had been dragged nearby, and asked for confirmation, "He's a Spirit Medium?"

"Yes," Amandina replied. "Padre Cali said Robert gained powers by touching that black boulder too. But why am I a Nightmare while he's a Spirit Medium?"

Higher-level, composite power… Just as the Great Mother can bestow three different powers, Apothecary, Planter, and Villain, respectively… Lumian wasn't surprised by this situation at all. Camus and Rhea were as puzzled as Amandina.

Lumian couldn't be bothered to explain this complicated and high-level problem. He turned around and said to Rhea,

"Your dream projection should still exist. Be careful from now on. The question now is whether the death of your dream projection will affect your life."

Rhea nodded thoughtfully.

Lumian shifted his gaze back to Robert, recalling the Demon that had assisted Padre Cali.

That should be the Nois family member who established a connection with Hisoka…

Demons don't do 'good deeds' for no reason. Whether it's establishing a connection with Hisoka or responding to the Padre Cali's ritual, it must have its own motives. Although witnessing a padre of the Eternal Blazing Sun Church gradually degenerate should be commendable and interesting for a Demon, this isn't a sufficient reason for its close involvement…

What does it want during the Dream Festival?

The cold corpse in the black ancient tomb can bestow a Prisoner pathway boon, and Prisoners are adjacent to the Criminal pathway which Demons are part of…

Lumian roughly grasped the situation and muttered to himself, "The crucial question now is, where do the gravekeepers go during the Dream Festival? Why aren't they protecting the black ancient tomb anymore?"

No one could answer him.

Seeing him staring at the unconscious Robert, Amandina hesitated before saying,

"Can you let him go? He's a victim too, don't kill him."

Am I a homicidal maniac in your eyes? Lumian replied with amusement, "As long as Robert doesn't seek revenge and try to kill me to avenge Padre Cali, I won't waste my spirituality on him."

Phew… Amandina sighed in relief, then muttered while rubbing her shoulder,

"You're so cold-blooded. I thought you'd kill me to deal with the padre. That shot hurt, you know!"

Lumian scoffed.

"Between being possessed by a Wraith until you die and getting shot, which would you have preferred?"

"I don't care what you think or the sacrifices—I made the right choice to save you, didn't I?"

Amandina, who was just grumbling out of habit, asked with interest upon hearing Lumian's response, "So you're willing to make big sacrifices and make correct choices to help important people?

"If, and I mean if, my desires were inflamed by a Demon and I'd become a monster without venting them, would you sacrifice yourself to help me?"

Lumian chuckled and said, "Don't have such unrealistic expectations of me. But don't worry, I'll find someone else willing to make that sacrifice for you."

His gaze swept over Camus, Lugano, and the unconscious Robert.

Amandina just muttered, "How lame…"

Camus inwardly sighed, feeling he'd escaped the beautiful dream world.

Lumian looked at Robert again and said to Amandina, "Wake him up and talk to him. I need a favor from him."

If Robert refused, Camus, the interrogation specialist, was there to persuade him.

"Alright," Amandina replied crisply, jolting Robert awake and informing her fiancé of their current predicament.

She consciously omitted mentioning Padre Cali's death to maintain the illusion that the Wraith had fled.

"Will you help if I let you go?" Robert asked warily as he struggled to his feet.

Lumian gestured to Camus and Rhea. "You may not trust me, but do you trust the patrol team?"

Robert fell silent for a moment before saying, "What's the favor?"

Lumian chuckled. "Go to Twanaku's house and do something for me."

…

Brieu Motel, second floor.

The man in the dark gray suit and the woman in the feathered hat heard soft chewing sounds coming from the corridor—a stark contrast to the shouts, cries, and moans echoing through the motel, as if it shouldn't be happening during the Dream Festival.

Suddenly, the chewing stopped.

Almost instantly, the man in the gray suit jumped up as if stabbed in the waist by a red-hot iron rod.

His face tense with sweat beading on his brow, he sprinted to the first floor, traversing the entire staircase in the blink of an eye.

He ran all the way out of the Brieu Motel to the intersection before stopping, his expression twisted with fear and lingering dread.

"What's wrong?" the woman in the light-colored dress asked, suddenly appearing beside him with confusion and seriousness.

The man in the dark gray suit panted heavily.

"Phew, phew, phew, didn't you feel it? That terrifying malice!

"The feeling of my heart being ripped out, my tongue torn away, my brain churned into thick soup…"

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Chapter 683 Dance

Hearing her companion's words, the woman in the light-colored dress's expression turned solemn.

"I had a similar feeling, but it wasn't as specific as yours."

The man in the dark-gray suit visibly calmed down and glanced back over his shoulder.

"Let's hurry to our destination. There seem to be many abnormalities beyond our grasp here."

The woman in the light-colored dress gave a single nod of acknowledgment.

After ascertaining their direction, they quickened their pace and swiftly left the intersection behind them.

…

Lumian, wearing a golden straw hat, led Amandina, Robert, and the others back to the small square from the side of Saint-Sien Cathedral.

At that moment, Camus spotted figures lingering in the cemetery on the other side.

Startled, he focused his gaze and realized they were pale-white bones hung with tattered cloths and humanoid phantoms made of fine ashes. Many upright tombstones lay on the ground, and many graves had clearly suffered damage.

"The awakened dead?" Camus furrowed his brow and asked Amandina. "The Dream Festival can also awaken bones and ashes?"

Regardless of life or death, they had to celebrate the Dream Festival?

Amandina nodded nimbly.

"Isn't that normal? Robert obtained superpowers from the Corpse Collector pathway during the Dream Festival. That's the Death domain, so the Dream Festival itself has such—uh, characteristics."

Amandina was secretly pleased that her knowledge surpassed that of a seasoned patrol team member in this area. She consoled Camus, "Don't worry. The bones and shadows in the cemetery are very peaceful. They're completely different from the humans at the Dream Festival. As long as you don't approach them, they won't attack you. They'll only wander around their graves."

"Of course they're peaceful," Lumian, who was leading the way, chuckled. "They usually don't have emotions or desires to suppress. They won't form an intense projection in this dream."

The dead were emotionless!

Of course, excluding those who had perished with resentment and hatred, those buried in Saint-Sien Cathedral's cemetery must have undergone purification.

"That's not funny." Amandina wanted to console her silent fiancé, but she felt she didn't have the right after witnessing his indecency and being complicit in killing his lover. Everything she said seemed hypocritical, so she had no choice but to speak to Louis Berry instead.

She muttered inwardly, Hmph, as his fiancée notarized in the cathedral, it's my legitimate right to punish my fiancé's lover. It's a little overboard, but in the face of the blasphemer, the demon who preyed on a minor, being a little overboard is a revelation from God!

The more she thought about it, the more right she felt.

Lumian walked swiftly along the shadows beside the road. After some thought, he said, "Will those killed during the Dream Festival awaken and become undead?"

"Yes, but it takes a long time. I've only encountered them near the end of the Dream Festival. They're cold and aggressive," Amandina recalled.

Seizing the opportunity, Rhea asked, "When will the Dream Festival end?"

Amandina replied with a smile, "Haven't you noticed? The wall clocks and pocket watches are still ticking. The Dream Festival ends just before dawn."

"Is there a way to leave the Dream Festival early?" Lugano was concerned over this question.

Amandina glanced at Robert, who remained silent.

"There's no way. We can usually escape by sleeping in Twanaku's house and being stimulated at the edge of the dream. Once the Dream Festival begins, we can only wait for it to end naturally."

Lugano shut his mouth in disappointment and unconsciously took two steps closer to Lumian.

Camus observed Amandina's brisk strides and fell silent for a few seconds before asking, "Aren't you going back to Palm Manor to protect your parents? Aren't you worried they'll die during the Dream Festival?"

Amandina pursed her lips and said with a complicated smile, "During last year's Dream Festival, I rushed back to protect them. I didn't expect them to have a

'happy' time and not be in any danger…

"My mother prefers the lowest-class, filthiest, yet relatively muscular slaves to do the deed while she curses them. I don't know what mental issues that stems from or which areas that indulges, but this way, the male slaves definitely won't kill her. Instead, her jealous lady's maids and female slaves who get too close will be subdued and forced to join if they approach.

"As for my father, he relied on his career in the Southern Continent to obtain the Legion of Honor medal. When awake, he's always afraid of attacks and slave riots. He built several bunkers in the manor and stockpiled food and weapons. He constantly practices combat, shooting, and military tactics. Even during the Dream Festival, it would be very difficult for the servants and slaves to take him down. They'd have to break through layers of defenses until he retreats to a bunker."

"Unless a Beyonder deliberately goes after them, they'll be very safe. If I stayed to protect them, it might be more dangerous—I mean I'm more dangerous. I might not tolerate the 'love' of those men or the jealousy of those women. I don't wish to kill too many people either."

Could it be that she's more afraid of sensing the malice hidden in her family and friends' hearts during the unconstrained Dream Festival? She'd rather gallivant outside and see others' dark sides than experience that herself? Lumian could understand Amandina's rationale.

He dropped the subject and turned to the silent Robert. "How different is your spirit channeling during the Dream Festival from usual? Will those spirits become more violent and difficult to communicate with?"

Robert, now in a white shirt and black pants, was silent for a few seconds before saying, "It's no different."

Could the excessive emotions and desires of the special dream exclusively target living creatures, leaving spirits unaffected by their typical lack of self-control? Or is the spirit world and its denizens fake—part of the dream aligning with Robert's imagination? It's likely the latter possibility. Spirit Mediums don't just connect with local spirits to borrow power. Robert didn't say some channeling was impossible in the dream… As Lumian's thoughts raced, he made a speculation.

Lumian led Camus and the others through the intersection, quickly returning to Twanaku's house.

He had asked about spirit channeling because it closely related to what he planned to do.

Standing on the second floor of Hisoka's house, Lumian said to the cold and slightly effeminate Robert, "Have you ever completed a spirit channeling here?"

"I've tried. I can establish connections with surrounding spirits, but there's nothing special about it," Robert replied honestly.

Amandina chimed in, "He tried it in reality, in the dream, and during the Dream Festival.

"We're all curious about this place's uniqueness and want to figure out the reason, but those spirits don't know anything about it."

Lumian nodded, took out his golden pocket watch, glanced at it, and said, "Come up to me in two minutes and help me with a designated spirit channeling. All of you can come up."

Robert breathed a relieved sigh, realizing he wouldn't face this alone.

On the third floor, in Hisoka's bedroom, Lumian spread his arms and performed the Dancer's Summoning Dance once more.

Previously, using the Mystery Prying Glasses in the real world, he realized this place had a mysterious connection to the black boulder. Just now, Padre Cali had mentioned that the black boulder was actually an ancient tomb—the source of his, Robert's, Amandina's, and even "Hisoka" Twanaku's superpowers, as well as the Dream Festival itself.

In that case, performing the Summoning Dance in Hisoka's house might attract special, strange items connected to the black ancient tomb. Perhaps he could obtain important information about the tomb or the corpse inside.

It was much safer than using the Mystery Prying Glasses or dancing after reaching the tomb.

Furthermore, Lumian had no intention of directly attaching any summoned entity to himself. He had enlisted Robert's help to ensure safer, more effective spirit channeling.

A Spirit Medium could communicate with surrounding spirits or through specific directions and descriptions. However, they couldn't rely on the Summoning Dance and a location's uniqueness to attract more distant, hidden spirits like a Dancer could. A Spirit Medium could borrow spirits' power to achieve supernatural effects and communicate with them in detail. A Dancer could choose to obtain a trait, ability, or limited memory fragment.

Amidst Lumian's contorted, sonorous, bizarre dance, his spirituality combined with the environment's unique power, spreading in all directions. As the intense dance neared its climax, something finally emerged from underground and condensed on the glass-enclosed window.

A human-like shadow wore a black robe, strikingly resembling the tomb keeper Lumian encountered at the dream's edge, yet with differences.

The hooded face seemed fixated on Lumian, eager yet sensing The Fool's seal and the Blood Emperor's residual aura, not daring to truly possess him.

Lumian didn't force orders. He continued the Summoning Dance until Robert and the others arrived, then slowed to a halt.

During this, he pointed at the black-robed figure and told Robert, "Hurry up and communicate with it."

Robert nodded slightly, retrieving a bottle of Full Moon Essence Oil from his pocket.

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Chapter 684 Two Answers

□□Observing Louis Berry's peculiar sacrificial dance drawing to a close, Robert wasted no time. He hastily poured some Full Moon Essence Oil into his palm, utilizing his abilities to fuse it with his spirituality and rapidly dissipate it.

Camus, Amandina, and the others immediately caught a refreshing, psychedelic fragrance. They felt their spirits were drunk, about to float out of their bodies.

Robert's voice echoed softly, distantly in their ears, causing their thoughts to drift farther and farther away. Fortunately, they weren't channeling targets, so they managed relative control.

The black-robed figure gradually left the glass window, approaching Robert.

Suddenly, the shadow vanished. Robert lowered his head, then slowly looked up, his face tainted by the night sky yet with an obvious sinister aura. His eyes were dark.

Observing this, Lumian ended the Summoning Dance, positioning himself three meters from Robert.

Although he'd intended for Robert to channel the spirit directly while he provided questions, the peculiar shadow had instead attached itself to Robert.

This too was a form of spirit channeling—many Spirit Mediums allowed a target's spirit to communicate through their mouth, answering certain people's questions.

Gazing at the sinister-looking Robert, Lumian pondered briefly, then said, "Do you know what happened to the people who lived here six years ago?"

He planned to start simple, least likely to cause anomalies, constantly adjusting direction, tone, and terminology based on the actual situation.

Robert opened his mouth, letting out a shrill voice unlike his own.

"Affected, performed a ritual, all perished."

This answer puzzled the others, including Camus, unsure if significant information was hidden.

Apart from Lugano, everyone guessed Louis asked about the fire engulfing the Twanaku family, with the spirit's answer implying a cult or evil gods' influence.

As a Conspirer, relevant information instantly surfaced in Lumian's mind.

The suppressed emotions and desires of everyone in Tizamo would be absorbed by the dream, gradually accumulating to form corresponding dream projections.

Like the gravekeepers, these projections would hide in the dream's chaotic zone, guarding the black ancient tomb.

In previous explorations, I saw the black-robed gravekeeper and projections surrounding the ancient tomb in dream fragments. One projection was the remaining figure of "Hisoka" Twanaku.

"Hisoka" Twanaku returned to Tizamo two or three times yearly for about a week.

After leaving, his corresponding projection would gradually fade until vanishing.

"Hisoka" Twanaku had become a Devil pathway Beyonder after the fire incident.

The Nois family's Demon…

This information appeared simultaneously in Lumian's mind, like disconnected nodes in a spider's web.

Soon, Lumian made a guess.

"Hisoka" Twanaku returned to Tizamo once or twice outside the Dream Festival, each visit lasting a week or more? Was this to ensure his dream projection didn't completely disappear, allowing the dream to absorb some of his malice?"

Do the projections and gravekeepers stay around the ancient tomb because it has something special that unknowingly affects them, like the tomb or the cold corpse inside?

If sacrificial rituals were part of the tomb's defense, when the Dream Festival commences and the projections return to their bodies, would some deeply affected humans attempt to imitate the gravekeeper's actions and perform a ritual? If they failed, would their entire family perish, corrupting the house and forming a subtle connection to the black ancient tomb?

Yes, that's a possibility, but I can't fit the Nois family's Demon or Hisoka becoming a Devil pathway Beyonder into this web of information…

What would happen if I inserted that?

Lumian's heart stirred as he considered another possibility.

It wasn't just the black ancient tomb or its cold corpse affecting the Twanaku family. The Nois family's Demon was also affected!

Perhaps the Demon had been coveting the corpse or the source of abnormality. For this reason, it secretly influenced the Twanaku family, giving them knowledge. Once the Dream Festival began, through its influence in the real world, it

magnified their corresponding desires in the dream. Coupled with the loss of self-control and wild indulgence brought by the Dream Festival, the Twanaku family took the initiative to attempt the sacrificial process from the ritual or dream projection given by the Demon, leading to subsequent abnormalities?

Had the Demon discovered Hisoka's uniqueness and lured him to the Devil pathway?

Yes, this explains why only the Twanaku family did such a thing when everyone has a dream projection and why is this house unique enough to allow lucid dreaming…

The next crucial task is guarding against the Demon. It probably can't participate personally, but its minions would definitely appear…

As these thoughts raced, Lumian gained a deeper understanding of the situation.

He looked at the shadow possessing Robert and changed his question.

"Where are the gravekeepers? Where have they gone?"

Robert's shadowed face replied shrilly, "Dream Festival begins, the tomb opens. Need to hide."

Need to hide? After commencement, does the tomb become abnormally dangerous or pose a hidden danger to the gravekeepers? Lumian glanced at Amandina. This lady, Robert, and Padre Cali arrived at the black ancient tomb during the Dream Festival, easily obtaining powers through contact.

Where is this hidden danger? How is it dangerous? And where are the gravekeepers?

Something must be amiss.

Amandina felt inexplicable fear under Louis Berry's gaze. Her voice trembled as she asked, "Is there a problem with this answer?"

Lumian chuckled. "The gravekeepers need to hide. Why didn't you two?"

Before Amandina could delve deeper, she saw Robert's cold, dark face contort in agony.

Seeing this, Lumian sighed, "End the spirit channeling."

If it continued, something would happen to Robert.

Robert retained complete autonomy and a certain mobility level. He immediately uttered two words in ancient Hermes to make the spirit leave his body.

The shadow attached to him remained unresponsive, and the agony on his face intensified.

Slowly, Robert drew a dagger and stabbed his finger.

Drops of bright red blood, mixed with his Spirit Medium spirituality, sprayed towards the window like bead chains.

While doing so, Robert bellowed in ancient Hermes, "Leave!"

The black-robed shadow detached from Robert's body, chasing after the blood and vanishing from the glass window.

Witnessing this, Lumian retracted his consciousness from his right hand, no longer preparing any "snorting."

He breathed a relieved sigh and said to Camus, Amandina, and the others, "Wait for me on the second floor."

"What now…" Amandina muttered, turning to head downstairs.

In just over ten seconds, silence returned to the third floor.

Lumian retrieved ingredients from his Traveler's Bag and set up a ritual, attempting to summon Madam Magician's messenger.

Unfortunately, being a dream prevented success.

Having anticipated this, Lumian wasn't overly disappointed. Though the early Dream Festival arrival prevented reporting the latest situation to Madam Magician, adding significant risks, such problems were bound to arise. He was mentally prepared.

Though Hunters liked to plan ahead, they weren't afraid of battle.

Lumian was even a little excited, not just from the Dream Festival's faint influence.

After stowing his belongings, Lumian descended to the second floor and said directly to Robert and Amandina, "Which one of you will take me to the black boulder?"

He had analyzed their situations, realizing that Amandina, Robert, and Padre Cali had easily arrived at the black ancient tomb and obtained powers, all led by those who had touched it.

Of course, they shared more than one thing in common.

Robert fell silent, wanting to say "Didn't you promise to let me go after helping?" but not daring.

Amandina glanced at the silent Robert, pursed her lips and said to Lumian, "Me!"

Then, she added, "I want to see if I can obtain more superpowers."

Lumian nodded and told Robert, "You may leave."

Robert glanced at Lumian, then Amandina. Without a word, he walked out of Twanaku's house.

"Gosh, he might think I brought you to the cathedral to deal with Padre Cali and embarrass him. Gosh, I was the one who brought you there," Amandina exclaimed after Robert left.

Rhea, who had already picked up most arrows, earnestly consoled her, "But you purified the cathedral for God. Praise the Sun!"

Amandina spread her arms as well. "Praise the Sun!"

After their exchange, Lumian said to Camus and Rhea, "Next, I'm going to the black ancient tomb. It's up to you to decide if you want to go."

"I…"Lugano tried to speak, but Lumian interrupted with a smile. "You must go."

Lugano shut his mouth.

Camus and Rhea exchanged glances and spoke in unison, "I'm coming too."

Lumian didn't persuade them, simply nodding. "Then let's set off now."

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Chapter 685 Illusion

□□Outside Tizamo, near the entrance to the forest, Lumian and his companions heard gunshots and shouts echoing from the direction of the military camp. The population was denser here compared to the town and plantations, and more heavily armed. Many lives were lost each year in this area.

Camus retracted his gaze and let out a sigh of resignation, like a world-weary middle-aged man. He knew he was powerless to stop the violence. His only hope was to find a way to end the Dream Festival as quickly as possible, so that more people might survive. This was why he had chosen to follow Louis Berry to the black ancient tomb.

If Camus were alone, the rational choice would be to find a secluded corner and hide until dawn, until the Dream Festival concluded—just like Kolobo planned to do. However, after witnessing Louis Berry's formidable strength and realizing the adventurer was willing to take the risk of approaching the black ancient tomb, Camus felt compelled to take action himself.

Lumian gazed ahead, trailing Amandina's light footsteps as she turned onto a narrow path threading into the forest. He harbored no illusions about single-handedly putting an end to the Dream Festival. His objectives for this mission had always been clear: Find the gold Hisoka had obtained, along with the item he had procured from the Nois family's Demon. Uncover what the key April Fool's member was scheming, to prevent Hisoka's legacy from materializing.

This was both the duty of a Tarot Club Minor Arcana card holder, and a reflection of Lumian's wariness towards Hisoka. After discovering the dream projection Hisoka had left behind, Lumian feared his adversary might exploit pre-arranged measures and the dream projection to resurrect himself to some degree during the Dream Festival, returning to the real world as a Wraith or evil spirit.

He was determined not to give Hisoka that chance.

After hearing Padre Cali's confession, Lumian's suspicions only intensified.

Hisoka returned to Tizamo each year to participate in the Dream Festival. He required no other host, and this unique dream usually proceeded without any abnormalities. It didn't appear that anyone needed to constantly monitor it.

It was important to note that prior to the fire that wiped out Hisoka's family, the special dream had existed for innumerable years. The Dream Festival had taken place countless times, yet no one had detected anything amiss. Under such conditions, the more individuals who knew the truth, the greater the danger of the information leaking out. Nevertheless, Hisoka still enticed Padre Cali and guided

him to the black ancient tomb to acquire Beyonder powers.

This anomalous conduct led Lumian to surmise that Hisoka Twanaku had enlisted Padre Cali's aid in monitoring the dream to verify the status of his dream projection.

The dream projection would gradually dissipate as Hisoka departed Tizamo, ultimately vanishing altogether. If Hisoka desired its continued existence, he would need to return for a time after it had faded to a certain point. Given that the dreams surrounding the black boulder were typically in a state of disarray, the rate at which the dream projection dissipated might be erratic. This necessitated daily monitoring. As soon as the situation was deemed to have deteriorated, an urgent telegram would be dispatched to summon Hisoka back.

Naturally, as a Devil, Hisoka would never divulge his true intentions to Padre Cali. He would undoubtedly be on guard against Padre Cali exploiting the dream projection to eliminate this lurking threat. When instructing Padre Cali on what needed to be done, there was a high probability Hisoka was really having him monitor the shifting dynamics within the dream.

How could Padre Cali keep tabs on the evolving dream? Through the dream projections and the condition of the gravekeepers beside the black ancient tomb!

Regrettably, Lumian couldn't enter the dream himself. He could only entrust Amandina with questioning Padre Cali. The intelligence gleaned was superficial, not delving into the crux of the matter. It could merely aid in analysis.

If he had interrogated Padre Cali directly, he would have been able to roughly ascertain Hisoka's objective, rather than just harboring suspicions.

At present, the leads concerning the gold and the Demon's gift both pointed to the black ancient tomb. Lumian naturally had to investigate and do what he could. If the challenge truly proved insurmountable, he would decisively retreat to Tizamo and conceal himself on the third or fourth floor of the Brieu Motel, allowing the "danger" to confront Ludwig, whose appetite had grown voracious.

Amandina guided Lumian and the others through the rainforest, drawing near to the boundary of the dream.

Abruptly, Lumian raised his right hand and whispered, "Stop."

He sniffed the air, detecting the unmistakable scent of blood.

With a Reaper's keen sense of smell and meticulous nature, Lumian could discern that the blood didn't originate from jungle animals hunting each other. It was human blood, rich in spirituality.

"What's wrong?" Amandina asked, taken aback, as if recalling her first venture into this forest with Robert.

Camus quickly sensed the problem and pointed in the direction of the blood's scent.

"Something's not right over there."

Insects were gathering in that area.

Although Lumian was eager to reach the black ancient tomb to thwart Hisoka's plan, he knew that the more impatient he felt, the more cautious he needed to be. He had to remain vigilant of any abnormalities along the way to avoid walking into someone's trap or missing crucial information and rashly starting a conflict.

Aurore had once mentioned that Emperor Roselle might have said that haste makes waste.

Lumian walked towards the source of the blood's scent at a measured pace.

As he drew closer, he caught a whiff of the pungent odor of blood mingled with decay.

The latter originated from the tranquil essential oil used to repel mosquitoes.

Lumian circled a few more trees crawling with poisonous insects and saw a corpse lying face-up on the humus soil.

The corpse's eyes were wide open, and its black hair was disheveled. Its face was smeared with white paint. It was Maslow, the captain of the Tizamo patrol team!

At the beginning of the Dream Festival, Maslow, who had "disappeared" behind Lumian, had reappeared in the forest as a corpse!

"Maslow!" Camus and Rhea exclaimed in surprise.

Before they could fully process their grief, Lumian's gaze shifted downward as he examined Maslow's cause of death.

The captain of the local patrol team had deep wounds on his chest and abdomen, as if he had been attacked by spears, triangular blades, and other weapons, but the edges showed signs of tearing.

Large amounts of blood had already flowed into the ground, attracting lingering mosquitoes. There were obvious signs of decay on Maslow's body, and a yellowish-green liquid seeped out, as if he had been dead for two to three days.

After ascertaining the situation on the corpse's surface and examining the surrounding battle traces, Camus said in a somber voice, "Attacked by the power of the Death domain…"

Death domain? The image of a cold, middle-aged man in a thin suit suddenly surfaced in Lumian's mind.

Reaza, the vice-captain of Port Pylos's patrol team!

He was a Mid-Sequence Beyonder of the Death pathway!

At the beginning of the Dream Festival, Reaza had "disappeared" along with Maslow.

Camus glanced at Rhea, who wore a pained expression, and hesitantly said, "They were affected by the Dream Festival and lost control of themselves. They attacked each other. One died, and the other escaped?"

This was the most plausible conjecture for the Dream Festival.

Lumian imagined a similar scene, but he frowned in confusion and said, "Why are they in the jungle?"

Shouldn't they appear where they were in the real world?

In reality, Reaza and Maslow had already returned to Tizamo with me…

Did something lure them into the forest?

As the only member of the Port Pylos patrol team supporting Tizamo, Reaza had known from the beginning that something was amiss here. Was the true target the black ancient tomb?

Lumian looked at Camus and Rhea thoughtfully and casually asked, "Were Maslow and Reaza on good terms?"

"Excellent terms," Camus replied with a sigh. "Captain Reaza recruited Maslow into the patrol team and provided him with extensive guidance."

Lumian fell silent for a moment before saying to Amandina and the others, "Let's continue forward."

Rhea and Camus seized the moment to gather some branches to cover Maslow's corpse. Then, they quickly followed the team.

After walking along the forest path for a while, Amandina suddenly slowed her pace and pressed her hand to the side of her head.

"What's wrong?" Lumian asked keenly.

Amandina frowned and said, "My head feels a bit heavy, and I'm experiencing hallucinations."

"What kind of hallucinations?" Lumian raised his eyebrows.

Amandina replied in puzzlement, "I saw the black boulder I touched previously—no, the black ancient tomb. It felt like I had returned to the past. Do you

understand? The past appeared in my mind in the form of an illusion, in front of my eyes, beside my ears."

Lumian pondered for a moment before saying, preempting Camus, "Let's go a little further and see what happens."

The hallucinations didn't incite Amandina's desire to retreat. With an experimental mindset, she followed the familiar jungle path for another few dozen meters.

"How is it?" Lumian, who was beside her, inquired.

Amandina organized her thoughts and said, "The hallucinations are becoming clearer and more pronounced."

"The closer you get to the black ancient tomb, the stronger the hallucinations become?" Lumian suggested a possibility before asking, "Did anything similar happen to Robert when he brought you here last time?"

"No," Amandina replied with certainty. "He was quite normal the entire time."

Camus speculated, "Perhaps he had already grown accustomed to the hallucinations after approaching more than once."

"Who knows…" Amandina muttered and looked at Louis Berry. "What should we do now?"

It's not a big deal if it's just hallucinations… Lumian pondered for a moment and said, "Let's continue forward."

"Alright." Amandina wasn't sure what the hallucinations represented. She endured the discomfort and said, "We'll reach the ancient tomb in a few minutes."

She continued forward.

As they walked, Amandina suddenly extended her right hand and pressed it against the forest trees beside her, bending her back.

Without waiting for Lumian to inquire, she recounted the changes in the hallucination and spoke intermittently, "I see myself… after touching the ancient tomb last time… I didn't… I didn't fall asleep immediately… I… I was still awake!"

"I… I see… someone ahead!"

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Chapter 686 Illusion and Reality

□□"What kind of person?" Lumian perked up.

He hadn't expected Amandina's hallucination to yield unexpected insights.

"I can't see clearly, I can't. It's not that he isn't clear… It's just that I can't make out the details." Amandina straightened up again, as if she had recovered slightly.

She pondered for a moment and said, "So I didn't fall asleep immediately after touching the black boulder—no, the black ancient tomb. When I woke up, I realized that I had gained superpowers. There were still some events that transpired in between, but I don't remember them at all. It felt like I had fallen asleep.

"The hallucinations I'm experiencing might have originated from the depths of my subconscious, from forgotten memories. No, not forgotten. They're just in a deep slumber. They're starting to become active and awakening bit by bit…"

Amandina carefully assessed her condition, searching for the source of the abnormality.

Pretty smart with a good attitude. She managed to maintain basic composure... Lumian evaluated inwardly.

Amandina's behavior was unfamiliar to Camus.

In his impression, Amandina was not only beautiful but also cheerful, optimistic, and lively. She was the kind of girl who could infect those around her with joy. However, due to her young age, she still appeared naive, childish, and inexperienced.

Unexpectedly, after their encounter in the Dream Festival, she gradually displayed an openness, maturity, and calmness he hadn't anticipated.

Amandina was puzzled.

"Why didn't Robert mention any dormant memories or the fact that I didn't fall asleep immediately after touching the ancient tomb? Padre Cali also talked about fainting and awakening with superpowers.

"The number of times they have participated in the Dream Festival in their lucid state and visited the black ancient tomb must have been more than mine…"

Lumian understood what Amandina was trying to convey.

Firstly, why did Padre Cali and Robert, who had been to the black ancient tomb many times, still believe that they had fainted on the spot and regained superpowers upon waking up? Why didn't they experience hallucinations similar to Amandina's?

Secondly, Robert had seen Amandina touch the black ancient tomb. Didn't he know if she had fallen to the ground or not?

Lumian pondered for a few seconds and said, "Perhaps the person you see standing in front of you has caused the relevant memories to fall into a deep slumber. And you're from the Evernight pathway, a Nightmare. Therefore, there's something special about dreams and slumber. The closer you get to the black ancient tomb, the more likely it is to awaken the slumbering memories, causing the hallucination."

Amandina tersely acknowledged his hypothesis of her being special and proceeded with confidence.

After two minutes, Lumian suddenly raised his right hand and pressed it down. He lowered his voice and said, "Hide nearby."

He had heard soft footsteps.

Camus immediately rolled to the side and hid behind a palm tree. Rhea crawled to another tree and concealed herself among the leaves.

Lugano glanced at the forest, where countless poisonous insects and snakes lurked. He kept telling himself, "Don't be afraid, don't be afraid. I can heal myself if I'm bitten."

He quickly shrank behind a pile of huge, brightly colored mushrooms.

Amandina had experience hiding in such places. Back then, she had witnessed Twanaku heading to the black ancient tomb.

Using the cover of the night and relying on her spiritual perception, she nimbly weaved through the low green plants and hid behind a huge tree in the distance.

Suddenly, a thick vine hanging from the tree came to life and swung towards Amandina, opening its blood-stained mouth.

It was a dark-green python!

Amandina's eyes snapped shut, and she clenched her fists.

The python fell into a deep slumber, reverberating weakly. It swayed a few times before finally landing on the ground.

Seeing that his teammates had hidden themselves, Lumian's body suddenly vanished, blending into the shadows brought about by the night.

After ten to twenty seconds, a figure traversed the path ahead.

High above, through the gaps in the leaves, Rhea spotted the figure clad in an intricate black robe with obvious layers. A fluffy black hat rested on his hair, and a gently swaying white feather protruded from the edge.

Lumian, in his shadow creature form, also saw the rough appearance of the figure.

His mind suddenly tensed as confusion welled up within him.

Isn't that Iveljsta Eggers?

Why would this temperance faction member of the Church of The Fool appear in a dream and become a participant in the Dream Festival?

Over the past few days, Lumian had explored the interior of Tizamo, the surrounding plantations, and the military camps outside of town. He clearly knew which outsiders had recently arrived, and Iveljsta was not among them!

Did he arrive here after the Dream Festival began?

Yes, he once mentioned that his original mission was to investigate something in the primitive forest around Port Pylos. Then, he received a last-minute order to deal with Hisoka's contact… Could the matter he's investigating be related to the black ancient tomb? The temperance faction belongs to the Prisoner pathway, and the Eggers family is descended from Death. It's normal for the black ancient tomb and the cold corpse inside to attract the temperance faction's Eggers…

Did Iveljsta Eggers encounter the Dream Festival while searching for the primitive tribe in the forest?

As Lumian analyzed Iveljsta's appearance, he scrutinized his expression through the shadows.

He saw an indescribable ferocity on the temperance faction member's pale white face. His dark brown eyes emitted a ferocity reminiscent of a wild beast, tinged with blood under the dim crimson moon's glow.

Although he's not affected by the dream projection formed by extreme emotions and desires, it's still difficult to control oneself and be restrained during the Dream Festival… Lumian wasn't surprised.

Ludwig and Kolobo were examples.

Considering Iveljsta's current state, Lumian didn't emerge from the shadows. He patiently waited for him to leave the area as the footsteps gradually receded.

From the looks of it, he's also headed for the black ancient tomb… Lumian transformed back into a human and stood on a path overgrown with weeds, gazing at the spot where Iveljsta's back had disappeared.

He raised his right hand and snapped his fingers.

"You can come out now."

Camus, Rhea, and Lugano left their hiding spots one after another. Camus even went to wake Amandina.

Amandina looked at Lumian and asked, "Do we continue?"

Lumian replied without hesitation, "Yes."

This time, they proceeded cautiously, paying close attention to their surroundings.

After another three to four minutes, Lumian, having prepared to deal with Iveljsta and Reaza, followed Amandina's guidance and slipped through a gap between a few giant trees.

A black, colossal, and familiar boulder came into view.

At a glance, it looked like a house-sized boulder, but upon closer inspection, one could see patterns on it. There were abnormal protrusions and depressions, and thread-like cracks that ordinary eyes couldn't detect.

It was indeed not just a stone.

Around the black boulder, tree roots emerged from the ground, covering an area the size of a square, resembling the protruding blood vessels of every human. However, they had been dead for a long time and were withered.

At that moment, the place was empty, devoid of anyone.

Iveljsta didn't come here? Isn't Reaza's destination here? Did they get lost midway? Or could it be that only those who have received the boon of an ancient tomb or a corpse can truly reach this area? Lumian surveyed his surroundings in confusion.

Amandina's brows furrowed once more, and she couldn't help but press her hands against the sides of her head.

She said with a hint of pain, "Th-the hallucinations have become clearer. I-I see more.

"The figure approached me, extended his hand, and pressed it against the top of my head!

"He… He's wearing a strange hat…"

Camus, Rhea, and the others didn't interrupt Amandina to see if she could recall more or awaken more dormant memories.

Amandina muttered to herself, "Was this how I was given superpowers?"

As Lumian listened to Amandina's words, he fixed his gaze on the black boulder that was said to be an ancient tomb.

He felt a sense of familiarity.

As a Conspirer, Lumian quickly jogged his memories for the source of the familiarity.

Soon, he had an answer.

The black ancient tomb reminded him of the Samaritan Women's Spring when it wasn't pale white!

It's indeed closely related to the Death domain… Lumian examined the Blood Emperor's remnant aura in his right hand and confirmed that it wasn't affected or showing signs of activation.

At that moment, the surroundings fell into an abnormal silence.

The rustling in the forest, the cries of wild beasts, and the gunshots and screams from Tizamo seemed to have vanished. The deep night fell into complete silence.

Amandina looked up and shouted in horror, "I remember now. I remember now. When I obtained superpowers, this place was also this quiet. It didn't seem like the Dream Festival at all!"

In the next moment, Amandina's pupils dilated.

"He… He… That figure… That figure has appeared!"

Huh? Rhea, Camus, and Lugano looked at the black ancient tomb solemnly and blankly. They didn't see anyone or anything unusual.

Amandina's voice turned shrill.

"Can't you see? He… He's walking towards me… He's walking towards me!"

For a moment, Lumian and company couldn't determine if Amandina's illusion was so vivid that it was almost real, or if something had indeed happened.

"No! Don't come any closer!" Amandina shouted, her expression breaking down as she gazed at the empty area ahead.

With this shout, Lumian felt the entire area tremble slightly, and his surroundings blurred.

In the blurriness, scenes appeared, like different fragments of a dream.

These scenes centered on the black ancient tomb, but different people stood beside it.

In some scenes, Reaza stood in a thin black suit. In others, Iveljsta stood in a feathered hat. A man and a woman approached side by side, while others surrounded black-

robed humans.

One of the black-robed humans turned to Lumian with a smile.

His skin was light brown, and his flaxen eyes were tinged with dark green. He was none other than "Hisoka" Twanaku.

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Chapter 687 Gaining Immortality

□□Lumian raised his eyebrows and returned Hisoka's gaze with a radiant smile.

The two individuals in different scenes exchanged glances through the blurry void, each casting their eyes in opposite directions.

Reaza, Iveljsta, and the man and woman who had just arrived in Tizamo had clearly seen the people in the other scene. They were astonished and dumbfounded by this incomprehensible, bizarre situation, but they couldn't interact with each other.

The gravekeepers in the same scene as Hisoka appeared to be praying, oblivious to the changes in their surroundings or treating them as if nothing unusual had occurred.

Lumian surveyed the area and vaguely comprehended the situation.

Regardless of how real this place seems, various encounters will mirror reality to different degrees. At its core, it remains a dream. And under the influence of the black ancient tomb or the cold corpse within, this area has fragmented into multiple dream shards. Each time a new group arrives, a fresh fragment is generated…

If not for Amandina's or my arrival triggering some abnormality, it would be impossible for people in different scenes to interact. They wouldn't be able to attack each other, nor could they see, hear, or detect one another's presence.

This must be why the gravekeepers vanish every time the Dream Festival commences.

They don't disappear. They're simply in different dream fragments from the Dream Festival participants.

Based on the results of the previous spirit channeling, is this some kind of concealment?

But the black ancient tomb hasn't been unsealed yet…

As Lumian's thoughts raced, Amandina's voice grew increasingly shrill, filled with terror.

"He's right in front of me! Save me! Save me!"

Lumian stared at Amandina, who was retreating in an attempt to evade the invisible creature, but he couldn't perceive the figure she described.

In the brief span of more than ten seconds since Amandina's panic attack, Lumian had used his Spirit Vision, Weakness Investigation, Luck Observation, and other abilities, but he hadn't detected anything unusual.

He was on the verge of taking out the Mystery Prying Glasses and the Eye of Truth.

Lumian reached into his Traveler's Bag. Without a rough grasp of the situation, he didn't know how to rescue Amandina, who had broken down from fright.

Just as his fingers brushed against the Mystery Prying Glasses, Amandina was suddenly taken aback.

After a moment, she turned to Lumian and said in bewilderment, "He—he turned and left. He seems to have recognized me…"

"Recognized you?" Lumian felt compelled to confirm Amandina's mental state.

Amandina replied in confusion, "Yes, he nodded at me and left."

Is this why, after the Dream Festival begins, anyone who wishes to approach the black ancient tomb must be guided by someone who has received the boon of the ancient tomb or the corpse? Robert and Padre Cali likely played the same role in similar scenes, but they don't belong to the Evernight pathway and lack dream-related abilities, so they didn't notice… Did the people in the other dream fragments also receive the boon of the black ancient tomb or the cold corpse? Lumian's heart stirred as he asked Amandina, "Where did he go? Where did that figure go?"

Amandina's gaze shifted to the periphery of her surroundings.

Her eyes widened with lingering fear and excitement. She raised her palm and pointed at the dream fragment where the man and woman were.

"He went there.

"He's gone through! He's gone through!"

Amandina's explanation made Lumian and the others feel the black ancient tomb solidifying and becoming heavier. The entire area shook even more violently.

Simultaneously, Lumian sensed a familiar burning sensation on his left chest, but he didn't hear any ravings that seemed to come from an infinite distance.

In a daze, he saw a huge aqua-colored vortex, a dim village shrouded in gray fog, and figures within the village.

Shepherd Pierre Berry, who believed in Inevitability, and Lumian's friend, Azéma Lizier, raised their pale-white arms, as if silently shouting.

Lumian also spotted his semi-subterranean two-story house and Aurore, sitting quietly on the orange roof with her arms crossed.

Lumian no longer resisted the illusion.

He roughly understood what was happening.

As the figure entered other dream fragments, the black ancient tomb's abnormality intensified. It contained the power of the Death domain, "awakening" the Cordu villagers within the seal.

These villagers were already deceased, with only soul fragments remaining. Naturally, they would be affected by the power of the Death domain.

This realization made Lumian feel pain, sorrow, and bitterness that he hadn't experienced in a long time.

He "watched" Aurore, clad in a light-blue dress with thick, long blond hair and light-blue eyes. She didn't attempt to resist the invisible power of death.

"He walked to that woman," Amandina continued dutifully.

That woman? Camus, Rhea, and Lugano turned their attention to the corresponding dream fragment.

Having just arrived in Tizamo that night, the lady in the light-colored dress didn't hear Amandina's words. She only knew that the patrol team was looking at her.

Her spirituality gave her a sense of foreboding. She hurriedly turned to her companion and asked, "Devajo, do you sense any malice?"

The man named Devajo, dressed in a dark gray suit, slowly shook his head and said, "Nothing."

In the dream fragment where Lumian and the others were, Amandina explained in high spirits, "He… The figure… extended his hand! He pressed his hand… on that woman's head!"

Just as Amandina finished speaking, Devajo saw his companion, the lady in the light-colored dress, suddenly collapse to her knees. Her expression was stiff, and her face was abnormally pale-white.

Ooo!

In all the dream fragments, an ice-cold wind howled.

Lumian "saw" Aurore standing up on the orange roof, her expression dazed as she gazed into the sky, as if sensing something.

She opened her mouth and spoke almost instinctively.

Lumian didn't know the corresponding language, but he had heard something similar before.

It was the language used by Armored Shadow Chen Tu, a language that Franca occasionally uttered a word or two of!

Although he couldn't understand, Lumian vaguely grasped what his sister was talking about, perhaps due to the connection between them at the soul level.

She muttered to herself, "An immortal blessed my crown, bestowing upon me the gift of eternal life.

In the dream fragment where Devajo was, the light-colored lady's hat, which had unconsciously fallen to her knees, suddenly flew off.

On her neck, the backs of her hands, and the surface of her face, pores opened one by one, producing white feathers tainted with faint yellow stains.

Devajo observed this scene with a solemn expression. He didn't attempt to interrupt his companion's abnormality and instead took a few cautious steps back.

He couldn't comprehend what was happening. Although he hadn't sensed any malice directed at him, he prudently distanced himself from the anomaly.

The lady in the light-colored dress's azure eyes had lost focus, appearing abnormally vacant and lifeless.

In the blink of an eye, the white feathers, tainted with light-

yellow oil stains, seemed to possess a consciousness and life of their own. They frantically emerged from the gaps in the fabric of the dress.

Within moments, the lady in the light-colored dress was enveloped by white feathers tainted with light-yellow oil stains.

Her body grew light and gradually floated, becoming increasingly illusory.

Her azure eyes fixed on Devajo as she shouted in a hollow and agitated voice, "I've become a god! I've achieved immortality!"

The white-feathered monster hovered above the black ancient tomb, incessantly shouting, "I've become a god! I've achieved immortality!"

In another dream fragment, Lumian heard Aurore change her words.

With a fearful expression, she whispered, "Immortal Ascension…"

In the next instant, the ethereal monster, covered in white feathers, flew towards the black ancient tomb in the dream fragment.

She passed through the stone wall on the tomb's surface and vanished.

Suddenly, the frigid wind ceased, freezing.

The black ancient tomb shook visibly, and the tomb door, outlined by hair-like cracks, emitted the sound of dull rubbing, as if someone was trying to push it open from within.

Aurore, "in front" of Lumian and the "surrounding" Cordu began to fade, as if erased by an eraser.

Lumian glanced at the slowly opening tomb door and turned to "Hisoka" Twanaku, who was in another dream fragment.

The dream projection wasn't surprised by the abnormality, nor did he show any fear. Instead, the silent gravekeepers around him rose to their feet.

Amidst the illusory sound of water, the tomb door of the black ancient tomb opened completely.

Accompanied by this change, all the dream fragments that appeared in the blur seemed to be pulled by an invisible force, fusing together.

Devajo, Reaza, Iveljsta, Hisoka Twanaku, and the gravekeepers materialized in front of the black ancient tomb, near Lumian and the others.

"Hisoka" Twanaku smiled, as if he had anticipated that one of the outsiders would transform into a "god" and that the ancient tomb's door would open at this very moment.

He retrieved a golden mask from his black robe.

The mask appeared to be crafted from pure gold, its eyes and face smeared with white and black paint, giving it an unsettling appearance.

Twanaku donned the golden mask and, unlike the other gravekeepers, didn't retreat. Instead, he sprinted towards the black ancient tomb and the open tomb door.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Lumian heard a distinct heartbeat.

It emanated from within the black ancient tomb.

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Chapter 688 - 688: Preparations

Translator: CKtalon

As Lumian heard his heartbeat, a palm reached out from the open door of the black ancient tomb.

The palm showed no signs of decay or yellow bandages. Its surface was covered in gold, shimmering with a mystical hue under the dim crimson moonlight.

Upon seeing the golden palm, Lumian felt an invisible force compress his soul, instantly severing its connection to his body.

Immediately after, he realized his body had transformed into a cold, solid wall, preventing his spirit from spreading or being controlled by his consciousness.

At that moment, Lumian's soul felt trapped in a cage, unable to escape. He could only see limited scenes through his eyes and hear relatively loud voices with his ears.

Everyone present turned into statues, frozen in place.

Faced with this situation, Lumian suddenly recalled a saying: The body is a cage for the heart, and the world is a cage for the body.

In the stillness, the only person still moving was "Hisoka" Twanaku.

The golden mask on his face emitted a hazy glow as he swiftly approached the black ancient tomb and the golden palm extending from it.

Although Lumian couldn't move or use his abilities, his soul was merely "imprisoned"—it didn't affect his thoughts.

Seeing that "Hisoka" Twanaku was almost unaffected by the golden palm, Lumian quickly deduced several things.

There's a high likelihood the gold Hisoka seized from Devise—the gold mine city—was used on the cold corpse in the black ancient tomb.

The item he obtained from the Nois family's Demon is likely the golden mask he now wears.

The former was an attempt to revive the cold corpse. Its equivalent to Franca's mention of creating a complete body. The latter ensures Hisoka can approach the target unaffected after the cold corpse's "resurrection" and achieve a certain goal.

Did Hisoka once plan to use this to control the cold corpse and attain demigod-level strength?

When 1 killed him in the real world, did the him in the dream attempt to "resurrect' through this?

Yes, Hisoka's Wraith power comes from the same source as the cold corpse. Perhaps there's a way to make the corpse believe he's its original spirit and accept his lead…

Based on the information I've gathered and what just transpired, humans who have received the boon of the black ancient tomb and the cold corpse can open the tomb without waking the corpse. To awaken it, an intruder must be bestowed with immortality by an invisible figure, ascend to godhood, and enter the ancient tomb.

And intruders will only be attacked by invisible figures without the Dream Festival's bestowed guides…

It's best for an intruder to remain lucid?

How did Hisoka know outsiders would participate in the Dream Festival this year and arrive at the black ancient tomb?

He didn't have such a plan to begin with? That's because he didn't know he was going to die. If he can't complete his plan during this year's Dream Festival, the dream projection will completely dissipate in the next few months, causing him to lose his last hope of revival…

The involvement of outsiders was a pleasant surprise for him?

No, its too much of a coincidence. Reaza's rushing over can be explained by his discovery of me investigating the Dream Festival and his worry that he wouldn't have a chance to obtain what he wants after this year. But why did Iveljsta coincidentally come to this primitive forest to investigate something? Why did two Beyonders who can remain lucid in the special dream arrive just before the Dream Festival began?

Moreover, why did the Rose School of Thought send someone to Matani in the last few mon ths of the year to gather detailed day- to – day information ?

"Hisoka" Twanaku originally planned to complete his plan during this year's Dream Festival. He deliberately leaked some information and clues to attract different factions of interest.

The information these factions received wasn't detailed enough. They had no choice but to dispatch personnel in advance to conduct the corresponding investigations or bribe members ofMatani's patrol teams…

This may very well be the truth, a truth that doesn't rely on coincidence. The only thing Hisoka didn't anticipate was his demise before the Dream Festival began.

Now, the Dream Festival is his last and only hope for resurrection.

If he fails to achieve his plan, he will die completely after today!

No wonder he's so secretive about Tizamo despite being honest about everything else in the dream…

Hisoka is truly a cunning Devil skilled at manipulating people's hearts. If he hadn't been bent on killing me and his identity had given him a good opportunity to choose to stay in Port Pylos, he wouldn't have been easy to lull. Yes, if 1 had played by the book and lacked the goodwill of a high -ranking entity, 1 might have died at his hands.

The Demon of the Nois family also has designs on the cold corpse in the black tomb and wants to use the Dream Festival. Therefore, when Hisoka mentioned the Dream Festival in his dream, he was immediately attacked by the shadow… Among those present, who is the Demon's minion?

Or could it be that the Demon from the Nois family hasn't arrived yet and wants to wait until the end, when the situation is clear, before taking action and completing the harvest?

If it's just a dream projection, without the main body's cooperation, there should be a huge loophole in Hisoka's plan. Where is the loophole?

Trapped in his body, Lumian couldn't stop Hisoka. He watched helplessly as Hisoka ran to the open door of the black ancient tomb.

Wait…

Since the black ancient tomb reminds me of the Samaritan Women's Spring, 1 can try that method…

Lumian acted without hesitation, focusing his attention on his Spirit Body's right hand.

Alista Tudor's remnant aura didn't just permeate his body!

And the Blood Emperor was closely linked to the Samaritan Women's Spring!

Wearing a golden mask, Hisoka's body began to etherealize uncontrollably.

Just as he was about to grasp the hand of the corpse protruding from the black ancient tomb, he suddenly sensed an extremely terrifying, frenzied, and violent aura appearing behind him. It soared into the sky explosively, sweeping through the surroundings.

The crimson moon's glow dimmed, and "Hisoka" Twanaku's body instinctively stiffened, trembling violently.

Splash!

An illusory sound of water echoed from the black ancient tomb, and the golden palm seemed to be dragged back into the tomb by some unknown force.

The feeling of their souls being imprisoned within their bodies dissipated. Lumian hurriedly halted the dissipation of the Blood Emperor's aura.

Although Amandina, Camus, Devajo, and the others instinctively felt fear, the confinement of their spirits and fixed line of sight prevented them from discovering the source of the aura that conquered everything.

Ignoring the search for the origin of the terrifying aura, the fierce-eyed Iveljsta followed his instinctive desire and retrieved an item from his hidden pocket.

It was a palm-sized rag doll, dressed in a black Gothic dress entwined with eerie vines. It had long golden hair and blood-red eyes.

The doll was sinister. Just the sight of it made Lumian's flesh crawl beneath his skin.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

The heartbeat in the black ancient tomb intensified, becoming resounding.

Beside the tomb door, "Hisoka" Twanaku felt a chill run down his spine, as if targeted by an evil being.

Instinctively, he recalled something.

Years ago, gravekeepers had found a half-withered evil heart near the black ancient tomb.

The gravekeepers believed that the ancient corpse in the tomb had been lost due to some mutation. After all, the characteristics of its power were the same, and the levels seemed similar. Therefore, they placed the heart back into the tomb.

Just a moment ago, the long-dead heart had begun to beat, but now it beat stronger and faster!

Not far from Iveljsta, Reaza also made a move.

He produced a mask.

The mask, also made of gold, bore a striking resemblance to the one worn by Hisoka. Varying shades of white and black paint adorned the eyes and face!

The difference between the two golden masks was that the one in Reaza's hand was darker, as if touched by death.

Then, Reaza produced a human skull carved from crystal.

He placed the dark golden mask on the crystal skull's face.

A frigid wind gusted, engulfing the crystal skull in a massive vortex. The crystal skull, adorned with the golden mask, levitated, as if it had grown an invisible body made of wind.

An intense coldness spread in all directions, condensing a layer of frost on the ground.

The man named Devajo reached behind his head and grasped something in his hair.

With a sudden tug, he ripped off his skin, along with his dark gray suit.

Devajo took on a different appearance. He had black hair, brown eyes, a cold expression, and high cheekbones. He was in his thirties or forties, dressed in a white shirt and black pants.

He flipped the human skin in his hand, revealing dense, dizzying blood embroidery beneath.

Devajo opened his mouth and spat out mouthfuls of blood, emitting a strong sulfuric smell.

The blood protruded from the human skin, forming a green-eyed man in a dark gray suit.

With a playful smile, the "man" approached the black ancient tomb.

Lumian quickly scanned the area, his eyelids twitching three times.

He couldn't help but criticize, Do you all possess godhood-level powers that you can utilize?Although they all seem to be one-time use… Are you bullying me for not having any?

Despite Lumian's criticism, he quickly recited an honorific name in ancient Hermes.

It was Madam Magician's honorific name.

However, it failed to penetrate this special and hidden dream.

Lumian wasn't dejected. His goal wasn't the black ancient tomb, nor was it the cold corpse or its beating heart.

Now that he knew the whereabouts of Hisoka's gold, there was only one thing he wanted to do.

Eliminate Hisoka’s dream projection, take away the golden mask, and let him perish completely!

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Chapter 689 - 689 Precision

The three items hadn't reached the point where Lumian couldn't be under their gaze simultaneously, and they appeared to last only a few minutes. However, they displayed certain humanoid characteristics, as if they possessed the ability to think and make decisions on their own. If targeted by them, it would be no different from facing weakened Sequence 4 demigods.

Under such circumstances, Lumian naturally wouldn't take the initiative to enter the eye of the storm and help "Hisoka" Twanaku share the burden. He even felt that if his rival was killed by an outsider whom he had personally attracted, it would be cause for celebration. It was inevitable—after all, since he had already killed Hisoka once, he wasn't obsessed with obliterating the other party's resurrection. Having someone else "do it" for him could reduce his spirituality expenditure.

As Lumian gazed at the open tomb door, he retreated a few steps to the edge of the area. He quickly said to Amandina, Camus, Rhea, and Lugano, "Retreat to the edge!"

Upon hearing this order, Lugano's face lit up with happiness. He was the first to turn around and sprint away.

Rhea raised her hunting bow, aiming left and right, taking slow steps back to guard against any attacks. Camus's performance was similar to hers, but he held his custom revolver.

Amandina glanced at the sinister rag doll, the crystal skull adorned with a golden mask, and the green-eyed man with bulging human skin. She felt lightheaded, as if she was too exhausted to control her body.

She instantly realized that these were things she shouldn't come into contact with. What transpired beside the black tomb was beyond her ability to interfere.

She swiftly turned her back to the ancient black tomb and prepared to follow Lugano to the edge of the area.

At that moment, Lumian, wearing a grayish-white lightning-shaped brooch, glanced at the gravekeepers who were also hurriedly retreating and thoughtfully asked Amandina, "Where's that figure?"

Amandina ran nimbly, synchronizing her movements with her breathing as she replied, "I don't know! He's gone!"

As soon as she finished speaking, the illusory water reverberating in the black tomb ceased.

The palm-sized evil rag doll in the Gothic dress suddenly floated up, escaping Iveljsta's grasp.

It hovered in midair, with "Hisoka" Twanaku's figure reflected in its blood-red eyes.

Twanaku, who was about to reach into the ancient black tomb, suddenly felt the golden mask on his face come to life. It first pressed inward, as if it wanted to crush his skull, then pulled outward, as if trying to escape.

Hisoka instinctively raised his right hand to press the golden mask back, only to realize that his sleeve had tightly wrapped around his arm, immobilizing it, almost like it was tied up.

Remembering the fate of a godhoodless individual losing the golden mask at the tomb's entrance, Twanaku didn't hesitate. His body became completely ethereal as he transformed into a Wraith.

Then, he vanished from in front of the black tomb and reappeared in the pupil of one of the gravekeepers who had removed their golden mask.

Due to the untimely demise of Hisoka's physical body and his inability to get "assistance," Hisoka had no choice but to modify his plan and wait for the three factions vying for the cold corpse in the ancient black tomb to begin fighting.

When the chaos reached its peak and the corresponding items were nearly depleted, he would re-enter the fray and compete for the corpse.

As Hisoka temporarily retreated, the area in front of the ancient black tomb became vacant.

Just as the palm-sized evil rag doll was about to float over, the crystal skull, adorned with a golden mask, flew diagonally, enveloped by a vortex-shaped body formed by the cold wind.

Pale-white flames ignited in its eyes, with a hint of darkness at the center.

In response, illusory black water seeped out of the black tomb's walls, forming a silent river that blocked the entrance.

The river was clearly similar to a stream, but it gave Iveljsta, Devajo, Reaza, and the others a vast and expansive feeling.

Their bodies gradually turned cold, and their lives drained faster, irreversibly.

The evil rag doll, clad in a black Gothic dress, hovered in midair, not attempting to cross the silent river.

The crystal skull, adorned with a golden mask, descended into the river.

The wind vortex that constituted its colossal body howled and expanded, as if transforming into an invisible ferry that floated steadily on the surface of the silent river.

The crystal skull, adorned with a golden mask, steered the ferry against the current, slowly approaching the open door of the ancient black tomb.

The green-eyed man, dressed in a dark gray formal suit made of human skin and blood, stood at the back, observing the scene.

With a smile, he opened and closed his mouth, as if silently muttering to himself.

Almost simultaneously, the crystal skull on the invisible ferry emitted a cracking sound.

The pale-white flames in its eye sockets flickered violently, and tiny patterns appeared on its crystalline surface, causing invisible dust to fall.

The ferry itself alternated between expansion and contraction, becoming extremely unstable as it slowed down on the River of Death.

Lumian paid no attention to the battle unfolding in front of the ancient black tomb. With a single glance, his body ignited with intense white flames.
Swoosh!

He transformed into a flaming spear and crossed a distance of 20 to 30 meters, aiming at the gravekeeper whose body had been possessed by “Hisoka” Twanaku.

Hisoka raised his head, revealing a face with light-brown skin and wild beauty.

Rhea!

The gravekeeper whose body had been possessed by Hisoka was Rhea’s dream projection!

Facing the rapidly expanding reflection, transforming from a speck of white light into a blazing white flaming spear with a burning tip, Hisoka didn’t dodge. He assumed a stance allowing Lumian to attack.

The blazing-white flame spear was incredibly fast. He didn’t have time to raise his hunting bow, aim, or shoot. He only slightly bent his arm.

He felt a searing pain, as if his body and soul were about to be pierced.

Hisoka showed no fear. Instead, he chuckled.

The blazing-white flaming spear passed over his shoulder and landed behind him, failing to strike him.

The flames dissipated, revealing Lumian.

The Hisoka in Rhea's dream projection's eyes vanished.

Rhea's dream projection spun around, her expression cold and filled with hatred. She raised her hunting bow, aimed at Lumian, and drew the bowstring.

She was a dream projection formed by excessive desires and emotions, unable to control herself.

"Hmph!"

Two beams of white light shot out from Lumian's nose. Before Rhea's dream projection could release an arrow wrapped in lightning, her eyes closed, and she fainted, collapsing to the ground.

Rhea, who had just arrived at the periphery, trembled.

Her eyes reflected the black-robed "Hisoka" Twanaku.

The strength of their souls differed significantly, and Hisoka easily possessed and seized control of Rhea's body.

Taking advantage of the fact that Camus, Amandina, and Lugano hadn't noticed Rhea's abnormality, he changed the direction of his bow and aimed it at Camus.

Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle. The arrowhead became engulfed in bright lightning.

As soon as Rhea aimed her bow and arrow at Camus, he sensed her incongruent state and noticed her abnormal behavior.

As a member of the patrol team with considerable combat experience, Camus looked at Rhea without hesitation, his eyes flashing with blinding lightning.

Simultaneously, Hisoka, who had anticipated this, detached from Rhea's body and leaped into Amandina's beautiful azure eyes.

Two blinding lightning bolts shot out of Camus's eyes and drilled into Rhea's head.

Rhea's eyes bulged, and her mouth gaped open. She leaned back, as if she had suffered a heavy blow, but she couldn't make a sound of pain.

Psychic Piercing!

Camus's Psychic Piercing struck her before her arrow could leave the bowstring, causing her to feel pain from the depths of her soul. Her mind went blank as she stood rooted to the ground.

Poof. The arrow, engulfed in bright lightning, shot out unsteadily, missing Camus and flying a short distance away.

Amandina, with “Hisoka” Twanaku’s figure reflected in her azure eyes, felt a chill run down her spine. A dense coldness enveloped her, freezing her soul and rendering her unable to control her limbs.

Behind her, Lumian’s figure swiftly materialized.

“Ha!”

Lumian opened his mouth and decisively spat out a faint yellow blob of light.

However, Hisoka had no intention of stopping. He shifted his position with another Mirror Jump.

Thud!

Amandina collapsed to the ground, unconscious.

Compared to Padre Cali, Hisoka clearly excelled in combat, possessing a wealth of experience and outstanding talent.

This time, Hisoka appeared on a water droplet on the surface of a leaf more than ten meters away. He leaped out and looked at Lumian and the others with a smile.

He wanted to use Wraith Shriek to attack Lumian Lee and his companions in a wide range, rendering some of them unable to fight and temporarily immobilizing the rest.

Upon realizing this, Lumian chose not to teleport outside Wraith Shriek’s range. Instead, he withdrew his palms.

A blazing white fireball condensed, the size of the black tomb.

“Ah!”

Amidst a piercing howl of pain, the colossal white-hot fireball flew out.

With a smile, Hisoka vanished from the tree and leaped into Camus’s pupils, where blood flowed from his eyes, nostrils, and ears.

At that moment, the colossal blazing white fireball split into dozens of smaller ones.

Accompanying this transformation, the grayish-white Fury of the Sea brooch on Lumian’s chest erupted with bright, silver-

white, and innumerable bolts of lightning after he was struck by Wraith Shriek.

The lightning coiled around the incandescent white fireballs and split into dozens, enveloping the area.

Rumble!

Amidst the consecutive explosions, Rhea, Lugano, Amandina, and Camus were sent flying by the wind and waves. They suffered burns and were struck by a net of lightning.

Camus's entire body went numb, and his gaze lost focus. Hisoka, who was attached to him, also suffered an electric shock. Due to his Wraith state, he was severely injured and couldn't undergo a new round of Mirror Jumps.

Lumian recovered from the Wraith Shriek's assault. He looked at Hisoka, who had emerged from Camus's body, and his lips curled up.

He was using Precision.

The goal was to attack every target indiscriminately and ensure the damage was acceptable.

And when he launched an attack, he didn't need to consciously control it. The Fury of the Sea would automatically add an electric shock to all his offensive fireballs!

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Chapter 690 Death's Symphony

□□Lumian endured the pain in his soul and eardrums as he activated the black mark on his right shoulder.

His figure abruptly vanished, swiftly materializing beside Camus and Hisoka.

As the residual silver-white electric currents surged into the ground, Hisoka, in Wraith form, was about to escape the paralysis's effects. Lumian activated the black mark on his right chest.

This corresponded to the Spell of Harrumph.

Just as he was about to harrumph, a sudden premonition of danger struck him. He abruptly turned around and stepped back.

A spear condensed from the light of dawn hurtled from afar, spanning a distance of 30 to 40 meters. It flew past Lumian and plunged into the soil behind him, leaving a deep hole as thick as an arm.

Lumian saw his attacker--one of the gravekeepers on the verge of escaping to the periphery.

He was tall, and even in his black robe, his robust strength was evident. A broadsword of light had already condensed in his hand.

A Dawn Paladin? A gravekeeper who received a boon from the Warrior pathway from the black ancient tomb? Lumian wasn't surprised at all. Instead, it only confirmed his suspicions.

What made his scalp tingle was that the other gravekeepers had also turned to face him.

The dozen or so bestowed locked their gazes onto Lumian.

Hisoka had already broken free from the paralysis caused by the electric shock. Worried about the Spell of Harrumph's control, he endured the pain and leaped into the eyes of one of the gravekeepers. Then, he broke free and transformed back into a human.

He looked at Lumian, who was dozens of meters away, and his smile widened.

I'm also a gravekeeper now. Harming me means harming the gravekeepers!

Although they won't actively assist me and will try to escape once the tomb is opened using the current method, they will undoubtedly react if you threaten me.

This is one of the reasons I dared to "invite" outsiders to the Dream Festival and guide them here.

Unfortunately, my main body is dead, and I can't obtain the promised godhood item from the Celestial Worthy and Loki to resist the outsiders' high-level powers. For now, I can only wait patiently.

According to the original plan, if something went wrong, I could choose to abandon the corpse in the tomb and help the Nois family's Demon obtain it to aid the Rose School of Thought in exchange for other rewards. Now, I must obtain the corpse and become its "spirit."

Only then can I survive after the Dream Festival and maintain my consciousness and rationality as a demigod-level undead creature.

However, these matters don't concern you, Lumian. You have to face a Guardian and multiple Spirit Warlocks, Gatekeepers, Soul Assurers, Spirit Guides, and Dawn Paladins...

No one below Sequence 4 can withstand the assault of such a Beyonder "army!"

Lumian watched as the gravekeepers' gazes fell upon him. Some of them even condensed broadswords of light. As they charged forward, Lumian tensed up. He reached out, grabbed Camus's shoulder, and teleported away from his current position.

Not long after they vanished, the ground silently collapsed, and pale-white palms extended outward.

Lumian appeared beside the severely injured Rhea with Camus and grabbed her shoulder with his other hand.

Then, the trio swiftly vanished, reappearing beside Amandina, who had awakened from the electric shock.

The distance between them and the gravekeepers widened to nearly a hundred meters.

Lumian clamped his feet around Amandina's arm, releasing the accumulated spirituality and strength in his body.

His condition returned to normal, and he activated the black mark on his right shoulder once more.

This time, the four of them teleported to Lugano, who was self-healing.

As Lumian continued to flash, some of the gravekeepers' Beyonder powers failed to hit them. The remaining ones were forced to change directions repeatedly, preventing them from closing the distance.

Just as Lugano was about to tell his employer, "Let's escape quickly. Teleport us back to Tizamo," he saw Lumian toss Camus and Rhea towards him.

Thud!

The three of them collapsed together, followed by Amandina.

"Ha!"

Lumian spat out a pale-yellow light, enveloping the four of them.

Lugano, Amandina, and the others lost consciousness. With their souls' strength, it would take them at least a minute to regain consciousness without external stimulation.

With this done, Lumian teleported away once more, preventing himself from being targeted by the gravekeepers whose abilities were effective at this distance.

His body vanished, and the gravekeepers, including Hisoka, lost sight of him.

Lumian silently materialized behind the gravekeepers, appearing in front of a palm tree.

Leaning against the rough trees, he retrieved an item from his Traveler's Bag.

It was a blackened bone flute with blood-colored holes.

Symphony of Hatred!

Lumian's lips curled up as he brought the sinister bone flute to his lips with a smile.

Almost simultaneously, "Hisoka" Twanaku felt a strong premonition of danger. He abruptly turned around, spotted Lumian, and locked onto him. He activated his Devil form, transforming into a pitch-black monster nearly three meters tall with curved goat horns and bat-like wings.

Hisoka instinctively abandoned his Wraith form, forsaking the plan of possessing Lumian Lee and restraining him. He found it impossible to remain calm under the aura capable of conquering everything and reflexively fled from the other party.

Accompanied by Hisoka's movements, the gravekeepers also turned.

Lumian's lips touched the black bone flute, emitting a bloody scent, and he played the first note.

The smile on his face widened.

In the real world, facing such a large group of Sequence 7, 6, and 5 Beyonders, he could only teleport Lugano and the others back to Tizamo. However, this was the Dream Festival. Apart from the few who had recently arrived and could remain lucid, the others were either fused with their dream projections or allowed the corresponding dream projections to move independently.

Dream projections were formed from excessive desires and emotions, and they would lose control during the Dream Festival.

Realizing that Hisoka's dream projection could also become a gravekeeper and maintain a certain level of lucidity and rationality, Lumian believed that it wasn't that the gravekeepers didn't have dream projections, but that they had fused with them. Using their uniqueness and their self-control in their lucid state, they barely suppressed them.

Such targets were the Symphony of Hatred's favorite prey.

It could inflict an attack on the weakness of an enemy's mind or body who heard the corresponding melody. Those with unstable minds might experience symptoms akin to madness. Those with psychological issues might have latent problems triggered. There's even a chance that excessive desires could cause them to explode on the spot. Individuals with illnesses or old injuries would inevitably face severe consequences. Those less fortunate might find themselves trapped in extreme misfortune.

Faced with the dream projections—against the gravekeepers who might have fused with them, Lumian felt that the Symphony of Hatred could be miraculously effective, igniting 100% of the targets' excessive desires and emotions!

Therefore, he chose to make such an attempt. If it failed, he would teleport back to the unconscious Amandina and company, hold onto them, and return to Tizamo.

A melodious and sorrowful melody sounded, but "Hisoka" Twanaku, who was too late to stop Lumian, instinctively burned the two curved and mysterious goat horns on his head.

Mental Shock!

Lumian's emotions swelled, and the melody he played was filled with unmistakable pain and hatred.

He also saw many spirits, as well as the gravekeepers wielding broadswords of light, rushing towards him in various ways.

He continued playing the Symphony of Hatred.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Apart from the unconscious Rhea's dream projection, all the gravekeepers, including Hisoka, halted with contorted expressions.

They heard illusory explosions in their bodies and minds, and their eyes instantly turned bloodshot. They lost control of their bodies, and their ears were filled with buzzing sounds.

They couldn't see, hear, or think. Their bodies and souls had been severely injured.

The same went for "Hisoka" Twanaku. In essence, he remained a dream projection formed by extreme emotions and desires.

However, as he suffered the Symphony of Hatred's weakness attack, he also ignited Lumian's emotions and desires from the impact.

Lumian's mind buzzed, and blood vessels bulged in his green eyes. A viscous liquid reeking of blood flowed from his nose, and his internal organs seemed to suffer varying degrees of damage.

The Symphony of Hatred fell to the ground with a thud.

More than a hundred meters away from Lumian, near the forest, the unconscious Amandina, Lugano, and company's faces contorted, as if they were trapped in different nightmares.

Devajo, weakened by spitting out blood to the human skin, silently approached the edge of the forest, ready to escape at any moment. However, he heard the Symphony of Hatred's melody.

He froze, vomiting copious amounts of bright red blood that reeked of sulfur. His entire being weakened, and he nearly lost control.

Iveljsta watched as the evil rag doll emitted a silent shriek, transforming the crystal skull with its golden mask and its invisible "ferry" into a pale-white goat. Just as he was about to approach the silent river in front of the black ancient tomb in delight, his pale-white face instantly flushed red, and dark-red blood flowed from the corners of his eyes, nose, mouth, and ears.

He had also suffered the explosion of emotions and desires, but he wasn't a dream projection, nor had he fused with one. Therefore, he was only severely injured, unlike the gravekeepers and Devajo, who were pushed to the brink of death.

Reaza, who had maintained his lucidity and rationality without a dream projection, panted heavily, as if caught in a struggle of his own. His cold eyes became rather lost.

In the area where the black tomb resided, only the evil rag doll, the human skin man, and the pale-white goat with the golden mask remained unaffected by the Symphony of Hatred.

Relying on his Ascetic endurance, Lumian quickly recovered from the severe damage caused by the explosion of desire and emotions.

Gazing at Hisoka and the others, who had yet to recover, he smiled and extended his right palm.

A colossal white-hot fireball swiftly condensed, engulfed in silver-white lightning, and launched.

Upon reaching the gravekeepers' area, it split into nearly 20 smaller lightning fireballs that blasted at "Hisoka" Twanaku and the gravekeepers.

Precision!

Rumble!

Blazing white flames and silver-white lightning surged simultaneously. Lumian watched as the gravekeepers, already on the brink of death, collapsed like straw, their lives extinguished one after another.

This is what Culling means… Lumian closed his eyes and took it in.

Rumble!

Apart from the unconscious Rhea's dream projection and the Guardian struggling to hold on, the gravekeepers were all dead. Only "Hisoka" Twanaku, his body still emitting silver- white lightning, remained.

His eyes were bloodshot, on the verge of losing control.

At that moment, he saw a flaming spear wrapped in silver-

white lightning fly over and collide with the side of his nose.

Amidst a sizzling sound, the blazing white flaming spear pierced through his skull, igniting his brain and flying behind him, leaving behind raging silver-white electric snakes.

As the flames dissipated, Lumian's figure appeared, his back facing "Hisoka" Twanaku.

The Devil-form Hisoka's eyes glazed over. He swayed a few times before collapsing to the ground.

Weakness Investigation!

Cull!

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Chapter 691 Pursuer

□□As the blazing white flames rapidly dissipated, Lumian turned his back on "Hisoka" Twanaku and fixed his gaze on the Guardian, who was swaying unsteadily more than ten meters away. With a chuckle, he declared, "Before, I needed my team's help to defeat you. But now, I can take you down alone."

His words were aimed squarely at Hisoka.

Collapsing to the ground, Hisoka's consciousness gradually faded as he caught Lumian's remark. He instinctively tried to clench his fists, but lacked the strength to do so.

A desperate gasp escaped his throat, his pupils dilating and losing focus.

Hisoka cursed himself for choosing Devil Transformation over Wraith Transformation when confronting Lumian Lee. If only he had opted for the latter, he could have disrupted Lumian's attempt to play the blackened bone flute with Wraith Shriek. Alas, he had no way of knowing the specifics, only able to sense the presence and source of a malicious intent. Given Lumian Lee's ability to infuse bullets, fireballs, and other attacks with electric shocks and target weaknesses with precision, Devil Transformation had seemed the more versatile choice, offering protection against various contingencies.

As for why he hadn't summoned a barrage of Sulfur Fireballs, even at the cost of mutual destruction—Hisoka sensed the considerable distance separating them. By the time he could conjure and launch ten to twenty fireballs, Lumian Lee would have already finished playing the flute. With teleportation at his disposal, Lumian could effortlessly evade the clustered assault. Moreover, spells like Language of Foulness had a limited range.

Left with no other recourse, "Hisoka" Twanaku could only resort to Emotional Shock and Desire Detonation, targeting Lumian Lee's weakness. He hoped that after both of them sustained grievous injuries, their recovery rates would be comparable, granting him an opportunity to mount a different response.

However, despite the pain, blood loss, and abnormal look in his eyes, Lumian Lee managed to maintain his balance. Fighting through the debilitating effects, he executed a precise area-of-effect bombardment enhanced with electric shocks. The effort inflicted fresh wounds upon himself and temporarily paralyzed him.

"Gasp…"

Hisoka Twanaku mustered his remaining strength to drag Lumian Lee down with him in a final, desperate gambit of losing control. But his life force had reached its

limit. Darkness engulfed his vision as his consciousness slipped into oblivion, a maelstrom of indignation, resentment, and agony consuming him.

The colossal Devil's body spasmed a few times before falling still.

Hisoka's last glimmer of hope for revival was extinguished.

He was well and truly dead.

As Lumian spoke, he drew his revolver and trained it on the nearby Guardian.

Disoriented and reeling, the Guardian instinctively condensed a broadsword of light. Dropping to one knee, he plunged it into the ground before him.

The sword merged with the earth, erecting an impenetrable invisible wall.

As a gravekeeper merged with a dream projection, this Guardian had no effective defense against the Symphony of Hatred. His companions, the Spirit Warlocks and Soul Assurers, caught off guard by the attack, couldn't pull him into a dream in time to avoid the melody's direct impact. He could only rely on his own physical and spiritual fortitude to withstand the detonation of desire and emotion.

For Beyonders with dream projections, this assault posed a mortal threat.

Before the gravekeeper could regain his bearings, another incandescent white fireball wreathed in lightning struck him, triggering a violent explosion.

Fortunately, his boon as a Guardian spared him the fate of his companions, who were culled like stalks of wheat. Without it, he would have been unable to mount even a token defense on pure instinct.

Lumian's green eyes took on an iron-black cast as he stood tall and squeezed the trigger.

Bang! Bang!

Twin yellow bullets, trailing blazing white flames and silver lightning, slammed into a single point on the invisible wall.

Rumble!

The already destabilized wall shattered. The Guardian could only watch helplessly as a searing white spear enveloped in lightning hurtled towards him, piercing his chest and sending him flying.

Another Cull, another bout of digestion.

Clinging to the last shreds of consciousness, the Guardian scattered the broadsword of light into countless minuscule fragments.

These luminous shards coalesced into a hurricane that raged in all directions.

Hounded by the storm of light, the blazing white flaming spear soared twenty to thirty meters before finally coming to rest.

As the flames ebbed away, Lumian straightened his posture, clad in a white shirt, black vest, dark trousers, and a golden straw hat.

Behind him, the bright and terrifying Hurricane of Light gradually petered out, thinning the ground. The corpses of the fallen gravekeepers and "Hisoka" Twanaku lay broken and strewn about.

Reeling from the Symphony of Hatred's influence, his injuries abnormally severe, Devajo's gaze flicked from the bodies littering the ground to Lumian, who stood facing him from afar. His already pallid complexion turned even more ashen.

What in the world is happening?

Is he even human?

Devajo, in whom thoughts of vengeance had fleetingly stirred following the blow, swiftly abandoned any such notions. Igniting the sulfurous blood he had spat out with azure flames, he hastily retreated into the forest.

He wanted to escape!

In any case, he could offer no aid to the human skin the archduke had crafted through ritual. Lingering in the vicinity of the black ancient tomb would only expose him to greater peril.

Lumian paid no heed to Devajo's flight. Though weakened, his spirituality remained abundant. Transforming once more into a blazing white flaming spear, he traversed dozens, nearly a hundred meters in a blink, coming to rest beside Lugano, Amandina, and his companions.

The four Beyonders lay unconscious, spared the Symphony of Hatred's melody—the effects were minimal, a mere nightmare, but still wracked them with pain. Their contorted expressions gradually eased as they roused from their comatose state.

Seeing them open their eyes and regain their faculties, Lumian instructed, "Leave this place at once and return to Tizamo. Find somewhere to lay low."

The conflict unfolding before the black ancient tomb was not something Lugano and the others could influence. Lumian himself dared not approach, so he intended to send his four temporary allies to safety.

He had previously consented to Camus and Rhea accompanying him, believing the former's Psychic Piercing and the latter's Lightning Arrows could synergize effectively with his own abilities to counter Hisoka's dream projection, Reaza, and the others. Amandina's power to compel others into dreams was also quite useful. Moreover, following her was the only way to approach the black ancient tomb

without falling prey to the invisible figure's attacks. To his surprise, Hisoka had displayed combat prowess far exceeding Padre Cali's. With the area unsealed and devoid of preset traps, not only had Camus, Amandina, and the rest failed to render aid, they had ended up hindering each other and becoming a liability.

Reflecting on his two prior battles—the attempt to capture Hisoka alive and the confrontation with Padre Cali—Lumian grasped a fundamental principle.

At times, there was strength in numbers. But in other situations, solitude was preferable. Facing different foes under varied circumstances demanded adaptability, lest one court disaster by adhering to a fixed approach.

Lumian recalled a maxim Emperor Roselle had once shared, as explained by his sister Aurore:

In warfare, as in the flow of water, there are no constant conditions.

"We can return to Tizamo? Even me?" Lugano couldn't contain his pleasant surprise. Instinctively, he extended his remaining hand, pressing the flickering light against Lumian's wounds.

As a Doctor, Lugano was unable to treat a patient's internal organs directly. He needed to open the cavity and make contact with the injured site. It was akin to performing surgery.

Lumian nodded and replied,"Indeed, but you'll need to remain under Camus and Rhea's supervision."

He planned to linger a while longer, to see if he could aid Iveljsta Eggers, a member of the Church of The Fool's temperance faction.

It was the duty of a Tarot Club's Minor Arcana card holder.

Of course, Lumian had no intention of venturing into the area immediately fronting the black ancient tomb. He might well perish before even realizing what had struck him. His aim was to ascertain whether he could sway Reaza and the others to interact with the corresponding godhood items, or utilize the golden mask upon Hisoka's corpse to some end.

At that moment, Devajo, who had only just arrived in Tizamo that very night, had already vanished back into the forest, retracing his steps.

Mustering his dwindling strength, he started sprinting.

As he ran, Devajo abruptly halted, casting a perplexed gaze towards the path's bend, obscured by the trees.

Beneath the dim, crimson moonlight, a short figure approached.

It was a boy of seven or eight years, garbed in blue pajamas speckled with yellow stars and a matching nightcap. His plump face and the short blond hair peeking out

from under the cap were smeared with cream, blood, biscuit crumbs, cake fragments, and sundry other substances. His brown eyes blazed with intense hunger and desire.

In his mouth, a vibrant, cold, and slick viper's tail writhed and shook as he gulped it down, segment by segment.

The boy's cheeks bulged as he chomped vigorously.

In the next instant, he caught sight of Devajo.

A wave of intense, terrifying malice flooded Devajo's mind.

…

Lugano, having secured permission, was on the verge of informing Camus, Rhea, and Amandina of their impending return to Tizamo when a petrified scream rang out from the forest.

They froze in their tracks.

Mere seconds later, a pitch-black monstrosity, towering nearly three meters tall with curved goat horns, came barreling out of the forest. It charged from the direction of Tizamo, making a beeline for the black ancient tomb, panic etched in its every movement.

That man just now? He's a Devil too… A minion of the Nois family's Demon, perhaps? Could the green-eyed figure fashioned from human skin be a manifestation of the Nois family's Demon, projected into the Dream Festival? Lumian's gaze shifted to the shadowed forest at the Devil's back, an ominous feeling washing over him.

He made a snap decision and addressed Lugano, Amandina, and the others.

"Grab hold of me!"

Lugano swiftly returned to Lumian's side, seizing his arm.

Camus, Rhea, and Amandina followed suit, startled but mimicking Lugano's action.

The five of them winked out of existence, reappearing in close proximity to Hisoka's corpse.

The instant Amandina's form finished coalescing, her eyes flew wide.

Voice quavering, she turned to Lumian and said in a deep voice, "T-that figure… it's appeared once more…"

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Chapter 692 Death before Rebirth

□□Appeared once more? Lumian motioned for Lugano and the others to loosen their hold and inquired of Amandina, "Where is he?"

Amandina's sky-blue eyes locked onto the entrance of the black ancient tomb situated at the terminus of the motionless river.

"He's sitting cross-legged over there."

As the words left her lips, Amandina shut her eyes and turned away. Minuscule protrusions emerged from her previously flawless and supple skin, each on the cusp of rupturing and giving rise to something unknown.

This reaction stemmed from her glimpse of the phantasmal, stagnant river and the ashen-white goat adorned with a golden mask, grappling to traverse the shallow waters.

The pallid goat's limbs, devoid of all fur, were extensively decomposed, exuding a nauseating yellow pus that swiftly encroached upon the remainder of its body.

Under the sway of the Symphony of Hatred, Reaza's wan and frigid countenance surrendered its final vestige of color.

The decay gradually consumed the back of his hand, neck, and cheeks, lending him the appearance of a long-deceased cadaver.

This decelerated the deterioration afflicting the pale goat's body.

Concurrently, the still river conjured by the black ancient tomb grew ever more illusory, its breadth and depth visibly diminishing.

The rag doll, shrouded in a sinister Gothic gown, drifted onward once more, shadowing the retreating river of quietude.

Abruptly, it pivoted to regard the green-eyed man composed of human flesh and blood, who, coincidentally, reciprocated its gaze.

Loathing, enmity, and lunacy erupted from the sinister cloth doll's crimson eyes. Its black Gothic attire, ensnared by baleful vines, ruptured into myriad holes, scattering fabric shreds and leaving it in tatters.

The green-eyed man in the dark gray suit seemed unscathed, yet as he advanced, he imprinted two footsteps saturated with vivid red blood, the aroma of sulfur swiftly dissipating.

One stride, two strides, three strides. Each step emblazoned bright red footprints, while dark fluid seeped from his human skin.

Iveljsta Eggers at last recovered from the onslaught of emotions and cravings unleashed by the Symphony of Hatred. He cast a glance at the tattered evil cloth doll and retrieved an object from his concealed pocket--a palm-sized puppet.

The puppet appeared to have been stitched together by a young child's hand. Its limbs were askew, its legs reaching its posterior, and its visage daubed with red, yellow, and white pigments, evoking the image of a circus clown.

Iveljsta infused the misshapen puppet with his spirituality.

It shimmered into intangibility and vanished from his grasp, materializing within the dark brown eyes of the Eggers family scion before vaulting into the green orbs of the man clad in human skin.

This caused the figure in the dark gray suit to stiffen and decelerate.

Lumian dared not prolong his gaze and hastily averted his eyes.

As Amandina closed her eyes and turned away, the minute protuberances adorning her skin receded.

Intrigued, she stole a glance at the monstrosity, suspected to be a Devil, hurtling towards the green-eyed man, seemingly on the precipice of succumbing to terror. She swiftly surveyed her environment.

Her eyes then fell upon the colossal Devil's incomplete carcass sprawled on the ground and a charred bone flute that had tumbled beneath a palm tree.

"There, there's something over there," she whispered, tugging at Lumian's sleeve.

Could it be a potent artifact discarded by a gravekeeper?

Lumian peered over and murmured to Amandina and the others, "Feign ignorance. Refrain from touching or even nearing it."

He had purposely abandoned the Symphony of Hatred there, deferring its retrieval.

In such circumstances, wielding it anew was far more prone to endangering his allies than exploiting an adversary's vulnerability. As a Reaper, he had no need to employ the Symphony of Hatred to pierce the target.

Thus, he feigned a lack of opportunity to reclaim it, hoping an enemy would attempt to turn it against him.

If a similar scenario unfolded, Lumian and the three godhood items would be the sole survivors capable of weathering the ensuing cataclysm unleashed by the Symphony of Hatred. At that juncture, he would whisk Amandina and her

companions away via teleportation. Upon later return, he anticipated discovering the enemies' lifeless husks and acquiring fresh spoils of war.

It was a trap he had laid in passing.

As Devajo, transformed into a colossal Devil, retreated to the proximity of the human-skinned man and drew near the ebbing river of silence, a short silhouette walked out from the forest trail--a boy of seven or eight years old, clad in endearing sleepwear and a nightcap. His yellow hair and countenance were begrimed, besmirched with grease, dregs, and blood.

Catching sight of the boy, Lugano experienced a piercing agony in his absent right hand.

"Man... Man... Man...." He gnashed his teeth in dread.

Observing his abnormal reaction, Camus and the others inquired in astonishment, "What's wrong?"

Tracing Lugano's line of sight, Amandina, Camus, and Rhea spotted the boy.

The former swiveled to Lumian in bewilderment, "Isn't, isn't that your godson? Why is he here? It's very dangerous!"

"No, he's not in danger." Camus recollecting Kolobo's exaggerated reaction upon encountering Louis Berry and his godson. He recalled some of the words of his companion from the Fate pathway and said with a solemn expression, "We should be the ones in danger."

Without waiting for Amandina and Rhea's misgivings, Camus regarded Lumian and knitted his brow.

"What do we do?"

As a godfather, you should have a way to control your godson, right?

Lumian's gaze flitted to Ludwig pursuing the Devil, then to the corpses and Hisoka's Devil form strewn on the ground. He replied with a grin, "It's not a big problem."

There was ample food here to form an effective seal!

As to why Ludwig had trekked to the black ancient tomb, Lumian roughly had an idea.

The man and woman who had freshly arrived in Tizamo tonight and taken lodging at the Brieu Motel were likely minions of the Nois family's Demon. By some means, they maintained lucidity in this special dream. Once the Dream Festival commenced, they left the motel and hastened towards the black ancient tomb.

During this process, they passed the second floor, inducing Ludwig to catch wind of delicacies. He forsook the insipid fare and shadowed them closely, matching the pace of a seven- or eight-year-old child.

At that moment, Ludwig's brown eyes were fixed solely on Devajo, the Devil.

"Why isn't it a big problem?" Amandina wore a look of skepticism.

Lumian smiled and indicated the massive Devil who had fled in proximity to the green-eyed man.

"He's here to hunt down that monster."

"Hunt? Him?" Amandina glanced left and right in confusion.

A seven- or eight-year-old boy in azure star-spangled sleepwear, pursuing a pitch-black Devil almost three meters in height, with curved goat horns and bat wings sprouting from his back? This is indeed a dream, right?

As he neared the green-eyed man formed of human flesh and blood and the black ancient tomb, Devajo sensed a tinge of respite. Yet, his mind remained haunted by visions of his tongue roasting, his brain scooped out by a soup spoon, and his arms and legs gnawed by the boy.

What kind of monster is this? Devajo watched in abnormal fear as the boy strode towards him.

At that juncture, Amandina, who had stolen a glance their way, exclaimed, "That figure is looking at the man in the black robe."

Iveljsta? Lumian peered over but discerned nothing amiss with Iveljsta Eggers.

Amandina averted her gaze, taking a moment to regain her composure before looking again.

She quickly explained, "He's not looking at the man in the black robe. He's looking at the Devil!"

Amandina abruptly halted, withdrawing her gaze and furrowing her brow.

"That figure seems to utter something… I don't know the language, but I understand the meaning."

"What did he say?" Lumian pressed.

Amandina dared not look towards the black tomb. She organized her thoughts and said,

"Basically, it means:

"Everyone in the world knows that crawling insects can spin cocoons. After the cocoon fractures, butterflies take wing.

"A common insect can transform into a fluttering butterfly and alter its form of life. Why?"

Unknowingly, Amandina's voice shifted, as if swayed by some influence.

She paused for a moment before answering the question in a low, cold voice, "Death before rebirth. Ascension into godhood…"

Before Amandina could finish her sentence, Devajo, in his Devil state, stiffened.

He beheld his flesh swiftly decaying, fragments sloughing off to bare ghastly white bones.

Within seconds, the Devil lost consciousness and crumbled into a mound of putrefying flesh and bones.

The remains fused as if alive, intertwining to form a human-

sized cocoon.

It rapidly shattered, and a human-headed avian monster draped in white plumage emerged.

After absorbing all the flesh and blood, the monster expanded significantly, its form undergoing a transformation.

The lower portion of its head rapidly elongated and expanded, as if possessing a body of its own. The flesh at its "waist" melded with the avian body, mantled in pale-yellow feathers.

"Hahaha!" Devajo, with innumerable white feathers sprouting from his eyes, nostrils, visage, and fingertips, erupted into laughter.

He slapped the white-feathered bird body below and soared skyward, as if riding it.

Devajo ascended higher and higher, gradually turning ethereal. Then he spiraled downward and entered the black ancient tomb.

Witnessing this, Lumian glanced once more at the entrance of the black ancient tomb but still could not perceive the unseen figure Amandina had mentioned.

His heart stirred as he took two steps forward and retrieved the peculiar golden mask from Hisoka's corpse.

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Chapter 693 Golden Corpse

□□Lumian looked at the gold mask in his hand, white and black paint covering the eyes and face. Without hesitation, he put it on.

A cold sensation quickly seeped into his skin, and the weight of the gold felt unusually real.

His mind spun as he gazed through the mask at the entrance of the black ancient tomb and the end of the still river, which had mostly receded.

This time, he finally saw a slightly indistinct figure.

The figure wore a strange rusted iron crown and a dark robe with peculiar patterns. Its skin was milky-white, and its eyes were so dark they seemed to hold the entire night. A pale-white beard fluttered around its mouth and chin.

The old man sat cross-legged, hands tucked into his sleeves. He leaned against the open door of the black ancient tomb, his expression cold and impassive, like a statue.

As Lumian looked over, the old man met his gaze. His dark eyes seemed to reflect Lumian, as if numerous phantoms had appeared.

Splash!

Behind the old man, an even more illusory, nearly lightless water wave rippled in the void. The colossal figure in blood-stained armor roared angrily, attempting to approach.

Lumian's right palm instantly burned.

The old man in the rusted iron crown and strange robe withdrew his hands from his sleeves.

His hands had pale, dark skin that was still smooth. The backs were cracked, each crack either covered in white feathers stained with pale yellow oil or dripping with decaying yellow pus.

Upon seeing this, Lumian's thoughts vanished, and he felt as if he were descending into endless cold darkness.

A familiar burning sensation emanated from his left chest. Combined with the burning, frenzied, violent sensation in his right palm, it awakened Lumian's consciousness, allowing him to find a lifeline in the darkness.

Using this opportunity, Lumian regained the ability to think. He saw nearly black blood vessels protruding from the dark eyes that seemed to hide the entire night. They were tainted with madness that threatened to bury and end everything.

The eyes closed, and the illusory ripples and colossal figure behind the old man vanished.

Lumian's vision began to clear, and his perception of the outside world fully returned.

A sharp pain coursed through him.

Lumian glanced down at his right hand and realized disgusting bumps bulged from his wrist to the back of his hand. His hair seemed to have thickened and turned whiter.

He flipped his palm over and saw that the mark left by Blood Emperor Alista Tudor's remnant aura had completely surfaced. It was a vivid red.

Surrounding these marks was decaying flesh, seeping pus, and pale-white skin.

Lumian frowned.

Despite the Blood Emperor's remnant aura being fully activated, Amandina, Lugano, and the others around him didn't show any signs of panic or fear. He didn't sense any extremely frenzied or violent thoughts either!

Wait…

The figure in the blood-stained armor seems to be Blood Emperor Alista Tudor…

This place feels similar to the Samaritan Women's Spring… Could the figure sitting at the tomb's entrance be the Underworld Daoist mentioned by the Armored Shadow?

Why are he and the Blood Emperor appearing here again? Shouldn't they be at the source of the Samaritan Women's Spring? Are the two connected?

Did the Underworld Daoist discover the Blood Emperor's residual aura on me and conveniently seal it? Even if I fully activate it, I won't be able to unleash the crazy Red Priest's aura?

Uh, I don't know if it's because of Mr. Fool's seal or because I'm wearing Hisoka's golden mask, but the Underworld Daoist didn't directly allow me to undergo immortal ascension, nor did he force me to lose control…

Lumian quickly grasped his predicament. As the immortalized Devil entered the black ancient tomb, the situation inside changed once more.

The tomb, which had fallen silent, emitted a rustling sound, accompanied by the clang of metal colliding with stone.

The next instant, a golden figure materialized beside the Underworld Daoist at the tomb's entrance.

The figure was covered in gold, with long limbs and a golden mask streaked with white and black paint.

It belonged to the same type as the one on Lumian's face and the pale-white goat's head!

The golden-masked figure stiffened, as if its limbs were dead. Relying solely on the strength of its waist, it sat up from lying flat like a corpse.

Eyes closed, it turned its head towards the pale-white goat closest to it.

The pale-white goat's aura instantly turned ordinary, making it unable to walk on the still river. It rapidly decayed, sank, and quickly vanished.

The golden figure, eyes still closed, turned its head to the tattered, sinister cloth doll.

The eerie vines on the cloth doll's Gothic dress suddenly came alive, coiling around the doll, rendering it powerless and immobile.

The corpse's head turned to the slowly walking green-eyed man.

The green-eyed man, his eyes reflecting the ugly puppet, suddenly halted. With a bang, his body transformed into a bloody piglet.

The ugly puppet landed beside the piglet, motionless, as if it had turned into the most ordinary and common puppet.

Ludwig's eyes lit up as he jogged over.

He leaped up like a massive frog and pounced on the bloody piglet. He grabbed its head and bit down.

Amandina closed her eyes in shock.

Louis Berry's godson turned out to be such a monster?

The pig wailed fiercely. The golden-masked corpse closed its eyes, turned its head, and faced Iveljsta Eggers.

Lumian's forehead throbbed. He wanted to break through the sudden paralyzing pressure and teleport over to rescue Iveljsta, but he hesitated.

Previously, he had restricted himself from approaching the black ancient tomb. At most, he would take a glance or two. Now, he didn't want to break this self-imposed "rule." Violating it meant immense risk.

However, Iveljsta was from the Church of The Fool.

Just as Lumian made his decision, the golden corpse turned its head again, but Iveljsta remained unchanged. He was still severely injured, his aura weak.

What's going on? Why did the cold corpse in the ancient tomb spare Iveljsta? The Underworld Daoist didn't do anything to him when he looked at him… Lumian was puzzled as the corpse's golden mask faced Reaza.

After the pale-white goat vanished, Reaza summoned an undead creature to envelop him and blinked to the edge of the ancient tomb area. He was about to escape into the forest, but before he could do anything else, his body froze.

Pop, pop, pop. Huge, wet warts erupted from Reaza's face, neck, and the backs of his hands, accompanied by disgusting mucus.

The vice-captain of Port Pylos's patrol collapsed, rapidly disintegrating into countless bloody warts that squirmed in the gaps of his thin suit.

The undead creature summoned by Reaza transformed into thin human skin and gently landed.

Lumian's scalp tingled as he watched. Finally, he broke free from the paralysis caused by the corpse sitting up. He said to Lugano, Amandina, and the others,"Grab hold of me!"

He was about to teleport back to Tizamo!

At that moment, the corpse's golden-masked face turned towards him.

Lumian's body turned cold. Ignoring Camus and company, he immediately activated the black mark on his right shoulder.

Suddenly, he saw the cold corpse's face, its eyes peeking out from under the golden mask with white and black paint, open.

It was a pair of cold, icy-blue eyes.

Icy-blue eyes? Lumian was taken aback, finding them familiar.

These are…

These are Naboredisley's eyes!

Dammit, why is Naboredisley here? Why is he a cold corpse in the black ancient tomb?

What right does He have to bestow the Beyonder powers of the Prisoner pathway?

It can't be real. It's not Naboredisley, but its eyes resemble…

Amidst Lumian's thoughts, he saw a smile in the icy-blue eyes, a smile of playfulness, understanding, and certainty.

This was a stark contrast to the pained expressions in the icy-

blue eyes on Hanth Island.

Suddenly, a half-withered, violently beating dark-red heart soared from the golden corpse's hand and flew out of the completely disintegrated still river.

A short figure pounced on the heart like a frog and grabbed it. It was Ludwig, his mouth filled with blood.

The smile in the golden corpse's icy-blue eyes grew more relaxed.

He nodded at Lumian and willingly fell back to His original position. He had no intention of seizing the opportunity to leave the black ancient tomb.

With a splash of illusory water, the tomb's open door gradually closed.

Seated by the door, the figure suspected to be the Underworld Daoist vanished.

Wh— Naboredisley's corpse doesn't seem willing to leave the tomb… How did He end up lying in there? Lumian couldn't figure out the reason, so he looked at Ludwig and realized the boy was holding a half-withered dark-red heart to his mouth.

Lumian wanted to stop him but lacked the ability. The surrounding corpses didn't seem to attract Ludwig as much as the half-withered heart.

Clang!

The tomb door slammed shut, causing the entire area to tremble.

Lumian and the others witnessed dream fragments one after another, and their surroundings blurred.

After a brief daze, Lumian realized he was lying in the middle of an unlit street. The crimson moon was bright in the sky, casting its light.

This was inside Tizamo.

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Chapter 694 A "Deal"

□□The Dream Festival came to an abrupt end? Lumian jolted upright, realizing he was holding the strange golden mask he had received from Hisoka.

For a moment, he couldn't tell if he was still dreaming or if the mask had somehow followed him from the dream into the waking world.

Lumian turned to look behind him.

Reaza and Maslow, who had died during the Dream Festival, were lying in the middle of the street, just starting to regain consciousness.

Taking advantage of the moment while they gathered their wits and slowly got to their feet, Lumian focused his attention on their luck.

He could see clear signs of death on both of them. Their fates were about to undergo a rapid transformation, irreversibly tainted by darkness.

Reaza's luck, in particular, was changing even more swiftly and dramatically, like a river suddenly plunging over a cliff to form a waterfall.

At that instant, Reaza remembered what had happened to him during the Dream Festival. Uncontrollable fear washed over his pale, cold face.

Pop, pop, pop. Huge, mucus-oozing warts erupted all over his body, just as Lumian had witnessed in the dream.

Seeing Reaza's eyes turn frenzied and his body start to disintegrate, Lumian raised his free right hand, pointing it at Reaza's mouth as if it were a gun.

A condensed bullet of blazing white flame shot from Lumian's fingertip, shattering Reaza's teeth as it entered his mouth.

Boom!

Reaza's head split apart inch by inch, engulfed in roaring flames.

The vice-captain of Port Pylos's patrol team collapsed heavily, his body covered in a thin black suit made up of countless slimy warts.

Lumian turned to Maslow, who was shocked by Reaza's grotesque transformation and terrified by the death he had experienced in the dream. Calmly, Lumian asked, "Who was he working for?"

As he spoke, Lumian tucked the golden mask into his Traveler's Bag and checked to make sure the Symphony of Hatred and his other belongings were still there.

Everything was accounted for, including the food he had thrown at Ludwig.

Maslow paused for a few seconds before answering, "We're all part of the Numinous Episcopate."

Numinous Episcopate… Lumian chuckled. "Do you still believe in Death?"

Wasn't Death already dead?

Maslow considered the question for a moment before saying, "Reaza told me that Death is on the verge of returning. There have been signs recently that prayers are being answered again."

Hearing Maslow's words, Lumian nodded pensively.

"Which faction of the Numinous Episcopate do you belong to?"

As far as he knew, the Numinous Episcopate was divided into numerous factions. There were the Royals, led by the descendants of the Eggers family, who sought to restore the Balam Empire's rule; the Artificial Death faction, which had somehow recreated Death itself; and the less influential Repose and Underworld factions.

"We're from the Royal faction," Maslow admitted.

"Did you infiltrate the patrol team on purpose?" Lumian asked nonchalantly.

Maslow shook his head.

"No, Admiral Querarill has been secretly working with us."

Admiral Querarill, the de facto ruler of Matani, is closely tied to the Numinous Episcopate's Royal faction… Combined with the Church of Earth Mother and the remaining Intis faction, this must be what Franca meant by dancing on three eggs. Judging by the situation, Reaza wasn't a traitor after all… It's no wonder Admiral Querarill didn't send backup. If the Numinous Episcopate and the Church of The Fool can't handle the problem, it won't matter how many people he sends… His mind now clear, Lumian asked, "Was participating in this Dream Festival a direct order from the Royal faction's upper ranks?"

"Yes." Maslow glanced at Reaza's body, now unrecognizable as human, and said, "Apparently the order came straight from the Empress."

Empress… The Pale Empress of the Numinous Episcopate's Royal faction? Lumian instinctively scanned his surroundings.

A sudden thought struck him. He drew the straight sword he had bought in Port Santa, picked up Reaza's clothes, and quickly searched through the items he had

left behind.

There was no sign of the death-corroded golden mask or the crystal-like skull.

Even though the skull had turned into a goat in the dream and the golden mask had sunk into the tranquil river, Lumian reasoned that it had still been a dream, after all. No matter how unusual it was, it was ultimately just a dream. When someone died, they died in reality, but the same might not hold true for objects. It was similar to how some of the food Ludwig had eaten in the dream had reappeared in the Traveler's Bag.

Even if the items were going to disappear, it would have to happen later. For now, they should definitely return to the real world!

However, Reaza had nothing on him.

A chill ran down Lumian's spine. Lowering his voice, he asked, "Termiboros, did you notice anything?"

Termiboros's majestic voice echoed in Lumian's ears."Do you only now know fear?"

"Tch." Lumian felt a lingering sense of dread, but he didn't let it show. "Was the Pale Empress watching?"

Termiboros replied in a deep tone, "It's not just Her."

Her? The Pale Empress is an Angel? Lumian composed himself and turned his attention back to Maslow.

Just as Maslow was wondering why Louis Berry was talking to himself, the other party suddenly asked, "Why did Reaza kill you?"

Maslow stayed quiet, offering no response.

Lumian chuckled. "Did you betray him?"

Maslow's lips trembled, but he didn't say a word.

Lumian smiled casually and said, "It doesn't matter. If you don't want to answer, don't. You won't be alive much longer anyway."

Maslow's face turned ashen as he considered the ramifications of his death during the Dream Festival.

Lumian nodded, then added, "Go on and do whatever you want. Just don't do anything bad. It'll make you die sooner."

With that, Lumian glanced at Reaza's corpse, which was starting to produce the Beyonder characteristic. Greed welled up inside him, but he suppressed it with an Ascetic's self-

control.

He decided that regardless of whether Reaza had been a traitor or not, his Beyonder characteristics should be left for Camus and the Matani patrol team.

To stop himself from giving in to greed and with a grave matter coming to mind, Lumian's expression shifted subtly. He activated the black mark on his right shoulder and teleported away.

Maslow stared at the street that had been empty a moment before and the lights that had been stirred by the explosion, looking as though his soul had left his body. With a dazed and despondent expression, he turned and walked toward the forest outside Tizamo.

…

In the second-floor suite of the Brieu Motel.

The instant Lugano woke up, he noticed he couldn't move his right forearm.

It's okay, it's okay. I'll be fine after a psychiatric treatment or two. The people in Tizamo can be healed by Mass without needing Beyonder effects… Lugano tried to console himself as he endured the pain in his right forearm.

Just then, he heard hurried footsteps coming from the living room outside his door.

Crack!

The door to Lugano's bedroom flew open. In the crimson moonlight pouring through the window, Ludwig appeared, dressed in blue pajamas with yellow stars and a matching nightcap. He was clutching a half-withered, blood-stained, dark red heart.

Badump! Badump!

Lugano could hear his own heart pounding, and he felt like his soul was about to abandon his body out of sheer terror.

Had Ludwig come back for seconds because he had woken up early and hadn't gotten his fill during the dream?

A moment later, Lugano saw a figure float in through the doorway.

The figure was semi-transparent, wearing an elaborate, opulent, black dress. There was no head on its neck, just a clean cut. In its hand, it held four identical blonde heads with red eyes and beautiful features.

"Return…" "It"… "To"… "Me"…

The four heads uttered different words in ancient Feysac, forming a complete sentence.

Ludwig's image was reflected in their eight crimson eyes.

"Mine!" Ludwig ran to Lugano's bed and spun around, looking like he wanted to bring the heart to his mouth, but he seemed to hesitate.

The four heads held by the translucent figure spoke one by one, "Idiot"… "Eating"… "Your"… "Own"… "Brain"…

"That"… "Is"… "My"… "Heart"…

"If"… "You"… "Don't"… "Return"…

"I"… "Will"… "Turn"… "You"… "Into"… "Pig"…

Almost at the same moment, Lumian materialized next to Ludwig, taking in the scene and hearing the corresponding words.

Lumian glanced at the strange-looking lady, then at Ludwig, who wore a resolute expression as if he would defend his food to the death. After a moment's consideration, Lumian said,

"Madam, perhaps you could try trading him other spiritually rich materials for it."

In Ludwig's current state, Lumian didn't dare try to take the item from him by force.

The lady in the intricate black dress, holding four blonde, red-

eyed heads, went silent.

After a short while, one of her heads spat out a gleaming gold coin and held it between its teeth.

A gold coin? You want to buy it with a gold coin? Ludwig doesn't care about money… Lumian was about to point this out to the lady when he suddenly realized the gold coin looked familiar.

It was a Loen gold coin, worth 1 pound.

Uh… Lumian glanced over at Ludwig.

Ludwig wavered.

After a few seconds, he finally held out his hands and gave the half-withered dark red heart to the woman's head.

The blonde, red-eyed head let go, dropping the gold coin into Ludwig's hand. Quickly, it sank its teeth into the half-withered dark red heart.

The translucent lady stepped back and vanished from Lugano's bedroom.

Ludwig hastily popped the Loen gold coin into his mouth, as if trying to hide it in his stomach. But then he seemed to think better of it and fished it back out. He wiped it off on his pajamas and carefully put it in his pocket.

Just as I thought, it's the same as Jenna's lucky gold coin… A Loen gold coin closely connected to Mr. Fool? Lumian nodded to himself, comprehension dawning.

A twinge of disappointment ran through him.

Two people close to me have gotten lucky gold coins. Why don't I have one?

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Chapter 695 Kolobo's Worry

□□Lumian snapped out of his daze and glanced at Ludwig, who had regained his composure. Turning to Lugano, who was shrinking into a corner of the bed, he said, "We'll head back to Trier tomorrow and find a psychiatrist for you—a real, genuine one."

This decision wasn't made out of concern for Lugano, but rather something that had long been on Lumian's agenda. 007 should have already provided feedback in the early morning hours. Lumian, Franca, and the others would discuss how to handle the Mirror Person, Moran Avigny.

Moreover, Lumian intended to seize this opportunity to extract Termiboros's power and obtain a Fate Appropriator boon.

His most significant gain from the Dream Festival was the substantial digestion of the Reaper potion.

He knew the Southern Continent was filled with conflicts and combat opportunities, which would help him digest the Reaper potion. However, he never anticipated that less than two weeks after advancing, the potion's digestion progress would skyrocket, much like a mercury thermometer's column shooting up when touching a living person's armpit.

Culling Padre Cali, Hisoka's dream projection, and nearly 20 others bestowed with strength equivalent to Sequence 6 or Sequence 5 made Lumian acutely aware of life's fragility. It was like straw under a scythe, constantly collapsing with a simple cull and scattered by the wind.

Furthermore, after experiencing the acting of the first four Sequences, Lumian felt the Hunter pathway had a distinct characteristic of bringing calamity. Reapers were no exception.

With this acting, he believed the Reaper's destructive characteristics that brought calamity were more apparent.

At the same time, Lumian greatly benefited from an enemy's destruction.

As his mind raced, he summarized his first Reaper acting principle: "Culling is about destroying the target and reaping a harvest for yourself."

If I had three or four more similar culls, I wouldn't need to comprehend other acting principles and put them into practice to digest the Reaper potion. However, such good fortune is rare… Lumian sighed silently.

This required gathering more than ten Sequence 6 and Sequence 5 Beyonders with obvious flaws he could exploit without interference.

Meeting each of these conditions was challenging, let alone all of them simultaneously:

First and foremost, whether humans consumed potions or gained superpowers through boons, their pathways and Sequences differed in their flaws. They couldn't all be burdened by dream projections like the gravekeepers in the Dream Festival, where emotions and desires exploded at the slightest trigger. Even if the bestowed were deeply influenced by evil gods and had mental issues to some degree, exploding emotions and desires weren't inevitable. Some might simply have mutated personalities.

Secondly, Sequence 6 and Sequence 5 Beyonders were uncommon, especially the latter, who formed the backbone of various factions. Even without factions, they could create their own teams and dominate a region like the Pirate Admirals. Gathering more than ten to twenty such Beyonders was no easy task.

Moreover, if a major incident caused the first two conditions to be met, the Beyonders' common flaws might not be countered by Lumian and his mystical items.

Finally, during the battle, a Sequence 5 Beyonder, a key member of the various factions, might draw the attention of the corresponding demigod.

A mysticism event like the Dream Festival, with its inherent limitations and natural problems, was unusually suitable for Lumian. Perhaps there had only been one such event in the Northern and Southern Continents in nearly a millennium.

Sigh… Lumian couldn't help but sigh again.

At that moment, Lugano was thrilled to hear he could return to Trier at dawn. He quickly replied, "Alright, alright!"

Back in Trier, his boss had more trusted companions. He probably wouldn't need to take care of Ludwig anymore!

Lumian thought for a moment and glanced at the curtains emanating the crimson moonlight. Casually, he asked Lugano, "Have you saved enough for the Harvest Priest potion formula and the corresponding ingredients?"

Lugano was taken aback.

"No, I'm still a bit short of the potion formula's price."

Most of his current "savings" came from Lumian, amounting to around 15,000 verl d'or. Based on his knowledge, a Sequence 7 potion formula usually cost between 16,000 to 20,000 verl d'or.

Lumian nodded pensively.

"I'll keep an eye out for the Harvest Priest potion formula and the necessary ingredients for you. If you're short on funds, I'll help cover the difference. Consider it a share of the spoils from this adventure."

Lugano was stunned momentarily before tears welled up in his eyes, blurring his vision.

I made the right choice!

My future truly lies with the boss!

With a hint of unease, he asked, "But that was a dream adventure. Can the gains be brought back to the real world?"

Lumian didn't elaborate. He retrieved Hisoka's golden mask from his Traveler's Bag.

It's possible… Some special items are possible? Lugano felt a sense of relief.

Lumian turned to Ludwig, who seemed to have acquired a cherished toy, and nodded slightly.

"You may go back to sleep."

Ludwig, wearing a blue nightcap, blinked and reached out to touch his stomach.

Groan. Groan. His stomach churned violently.

Lumian laughed self-deprecatingly and took out the portion of food Ludwig had eaten in the dream, including almond pistachio cream cake, liquor-infused chocolate, éclairs, and more.

After Ludwig began his "quiet" meal, Lumian returned to his room and conjured a blazing white fireball. He unfolded the letter, picked up a fountain pen, and penned a letter to Madam Magician.

This took precedence over dealing with other matters.

As he wrote, Lumian pondered something.

If I killed all the elders of the gravekeepers, would the primitive tribe still possess the ability to attack and eliminate the dead?

Or are they still alive in the real world, waiting to drag those already dead down with them when they attack Tizamo?

Or would the deceased find another way out, like the fire that had engulfed the Twanaku family?

…

On the third floor of the police headquarters in Tizamo Town.

Camus snapped out of his reverie and instinctively glanced at the temporary bed opposite him. He noticed the blanket had been lifted, and Kolobo was nowhere to be found.

Am I still dreaming, still in the Dream Festival? Camus sat up cautiously and heard a sound near the door in the corner.

In the darkness, under the crimson moonlight seeping through the curtains, he saw Kolobo crouched there, curled up and trembling.

Camus lowered his voice and gently asked, "What's wrong?"

Kolobo's voice quivered as he replied, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!"

The sky is falling? Camus found it amusing and looked at Kolobo.

"Did you misinterpret your premonition?"

How could the sky possibly fall?

…

Outside Tizamo, at the edge of the primitive forest.

Maslow, his face adorned with white paint, slowly advanced into the forest.

It was a terrible feeling to know about his impending yet unavoidable death.

He regretted betraying the Numinous Episcopate, but there had been no choice. Shortly after arriving in Tizamo, he had been secretly controlled by Twanaku, who had returned for a "vacation." He had become a fallen one monitoring the situation of Padre Cali and Tizamo.

Subsequently, although he knew Twanaku had been killed, the other party's dream projection appeared in his dream, telling him the matter wasn't over.

Maslow advanced step by step, yearning to return to the forest and become nourishment for a tree, just like his ancestors.

As he walked, he spotted nearly 20 people emerging from the nearby barracks.

The men seemed to sense something amiss and prepared to inspect their surroundings.

At that moment, Maslow felt the night suddenly brighten.

Subconsciously, he looked up at the sky and saw a burning boulder descending with a crimson flame tail.

In an instant, the burning boulder filled Maslow's vision.

It crashed into the area between the forest's edge and the barracks.

Rumble!

The wind and dust stirred by the meteorite swiftly filled the area, rising into the air and dissipating, obscuring the crimson moon and the starlight.

Rumble!

The entirety of Tizamo seemed to experience a violent earthquake. Buildings shook violently, and glass shattered.

Several houses with weak foundations quickly collapsed, burying their occupants.

With great difficulty, Camus regained his balance. Once the building stabilized, he rushed to the shattered window and looked out.

He saw the "sky" was gray and murky, so close he could touch it if he jumped up.

The "sky" has really fallen… For some inexplicable reason, this thought flashed through Camus's mind.

…

In the second-floor suite of the Brieu Motel.

Clutching the letter and fountain pen, Lumian watched the smoke and dust outside with amusement, sensing the "heavy blow" not far away.

"How direct…" he sighed sincerely.

A meteorite had descended from the sky!

From the looks of it, the catastrophe had likely eliminated most of the deceased.

Lumian turned to look at the door, which had swung open due to the building's shaking, and saw Ludwig still focused on eating.

Nothing from the pile of food had fallen to the ground.

After sending Lugano out to assist the injured, Lumian returned to his room and continued writing.

Upon completion, he immediately set up a ritual and summoned the "doll" messenger.

Just as the "doll" messenger emerged from the expanding candle flame, it suddenly shrank.

Slowly, she glanced to her left and then to her right. After confirming there was no problem, she tiptoed and cautiously approached Lumian's letter.

Lumian had never seen the "doll" messenger act like this before. He watched in confusion and amusement as she picked up the folded letter like a thief. She waved at him and quickly retreated into the candle flame.

Lumian chuckled and shook his head, no longer pondering the "doll" messenger's actions.

At the very least, it seemed harmless, and he had several things to do.

Lumian left the bedroom, entered the corridor, and went to the first floor. He grabbed the motel owner, who had come out to check on the situation after waking up, and asked, "Which room are the lady and her companion who arrived tonight staying in?"

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Chapter 696 Feathers

□□In Twanaku's house in Tizamo Town, Amandina woke up amidst the violent shaking of the building.

She stood up groggily and looked out the window. The sky had turned gray and was pressing down, completely obscuring the crimson moon and stars.

In the near-absolute darkness, Amandina turned and cast her gaze not far away. Dressed neatly, Robert rose slowly, his sluggish movements suggesting he was struggling to adapt to the lightless environment.

When the tremors in the ground and buildings finally ceased, Robert used his Spirit Vision to spot Amandina. After a moment's hesitation, he asked, "Are we awake?"

He recalled that before entering the Dream Festival, he and Amandina had used a date as an excuse to rendezvous. When they ended up in the special dream, they temporarily parted ways—one stayed put while the other went to Saint-Sien Cathedral.

Glancing at the suddenly noisy street outside, Amandina thought for a few seconds before replying, "Probably… but I don't know what's going on."

As Robert recalled the dream encounters, both fell silent. Eventually, he asked in a deep voice, "What happened to you in the end?"

Amandina suddenly chuckled. "Nothing much."

Robert closed his mouth again. With her night vision, Amandina looked at him, smiling with mixed emotions. "Is there anything else you want to ask?"

After a long pause, Robert said, "What did you experience afterward?"

Taking in the silence of the house, Amandina finally whispered, "I saw the one who granted me powers."

"The one who granted you powers?" Robert asked, surprised.

Amandina laughed. "We didn't actually fall asleep after touching the black ancient tomb. We only truly fainted after receiving the powers."

"How is that possible…" Robert looked incredulous.

Amandina didn't try to convince him. Instead, she muttered, "Upon acquiring superpowers, one immediately falls into a coma or slumber. When they wake up, they completely grasp that power. Their spirit and flesh undergo a certain transformation…

"Is this considered a low-level death before rebirth?"

"What are you talking about?" Robert's confusion grew.

It was completely incomprehensible!

Amandina's eyes darted around as she smiled.

"That person told me. Perhaps it's a form of guidance."

"Guidance…" Using his Spirit Vision, the only way to ascertain her condition in the darkness, Robert gazed at Amandina.

He felt his fiancée was different, as if she had grown up overnight.

Amandina wanted to recount the encounter in detail as usual, but swallowed her words.

Sighing, she said, "Aren't you going to check on Padre Cali? He might not have long to live."

Snapping out of his reverie, Robert blurted out, "He fled to the ancient tomb and was killed?"

"He's indeed dead," Amandina confirmed.

Robert's expression shifted, but he didn't inquire about the murderer's identity. After a moment's thought, Amandina said, "Before you go to Padre Cali, I need to tell you something.

"The desire you felt when you first faced him didn't come from your heart. He prayed to a Demon through a ritual and obtained the power to influence you."

Robert's eyes widened, his mouth gaped, but no sound came out.

Without further ado, Amandina strode past him towards the staircase.

Pressing down on the railing, she paused and tersely acknowledged, "Let's find an excuse to annul the engagement. I can accept other things about you, but I can't accept how my fiancé allowed me to follow Louis Berry alone to find the black ancient tomb under those circumstances.

"Don't worry, I won't tell anyone about your matters. Those who knew in my dream won't tell either."

Robert spun around, his gaze fixed on the staircase as Amandina descended step by step, the darkness engulfing her spirituality's light.

Leaving Twanaku's house, Amandina stepped onto the street.

She glanced at the dark, low sky, the sporadic lights on both sides, and caught a whiff of the dusty air.

With her hand covering her nose, Amandina made her way towards the manor, her steps gradually quickening.

…

On the third floor of the police headquarters in Tizamo Town, just as Camus felt Kolobo's trembling subside, as if he had composed himself, painful curses echoed from the next room.

His heart stirred as he lit a candle and pushed open the slightly deformed wooden door. Inside, he saw the Feysacian, Loban, lying on the ground, clutching his knee and screaming in agony.

The member of the Tizamo patrol team had woken from the earthquake-like commotion and tried to get out of bed to find cover, but one leg strangely lost strength, accompanied by intense pain, causing him to collapse.

Before Camus could organize his thoughts, Rhea's voice echoed beside him.

"Don't worry. It's the mass hysteria mentioned in the investigations. You'll recover after going to the corresponding Mass."

Having cooperated with Camus to investigate the abnormalities in Tizamo, Loban quickly understood Rhea.

Cursing, he struggled to his feet, retrieved a military flask from under his pillow, and downed a few gulps of liquor.

After drinking until color returned to his face, Loban sighed with relief.

"I feel my knee has recovered a little. Sometimes, alcohol is more useful than Mass!"

Breathing a sigh of relief, Camus turned to Rhea, realizing his teammate's expression had turned colder.

After what just happened, her dream projection has completely vanished. Have the emotions and desires returned to her body? Will the special dreamscape still exist, and will there be a Dream Festival next year? Camus instantly made many connections.

At that moment, Rhea said to him, "Let's go out and see if we can save some people. Those who died during the Dream Festival shouldn't be the only ones injured."

Taken aback, Camus replied, "Okay."

Joy welled up in his heart, sensing Rhea hadn't undergone any fundamental changes due to the return of her emotions and desires.

…

Following the Brieu Motel owner's instructions, Lumian arrived on the fourth floor and opened the corresponding room's wooden door.

The near pitch-black darkness receded under a blazing white fireball's illumination, revealing everything to Lumian.

Some items had fallen due to the tremors, tables and chairs had shifted, and a small amount of dust had sprinkled from the ceiling. The window was tightly shut, but the glass had shattered. Apart from this, there was nothing noteworthy, and no sign of humans.

Scanning the area, Lumian found no trace of the man or woman.

Frowning, he muttered to himself, According to the original Dream Festival's rules, death in a dream doesn't equate to immediate death. Did they leave Tizamo after waking up? I planned to take care of their corpses and inherit their Beyonder characteristics…

Lumian didn't believe the man and woman couldn't leave just because the door and window were tightly shut. After all, they were two Mid-Sequence Beyonders, and one was even a Devil. Perhaps they had special abilities to resolve that problem.

As Lumian contemplated searching for traces and chasing after them to eliminate the deceased on behalf of the Dream Festival, he casually examined the room's various details. Suddenly, his pupils dilated, and his eyes froze.

He saw a feather lying quietly under the recliner by the window

—a white feather stained with light-yellow oil!

Lumian's scalp tingled as he silently took two steps back into the corridor.

Like Reaza, were the man and woman already dead and had undergone an abnormality? What about their corpses?

Disappeared?

Would humans who had ascended to godhood exhibit different behaviors after leaving the Dream Festival?

With a blazing white fireball floating behind him, Lumian scrutinized the room, filled with questions. Perhaps the man and woman's "corpses" were still here, but he couldn't see them.

Cautiously entering, he approached the recliner, sensing nothing unusual and discovering no signs of the formless object. Lumian retrieved the Mystery Prying Glasses and the Eye of Truth from his Traveler's Bag, donning them one by one.

He still couldn't see the man and woman. His vision was filled with chaotic darkness, a dark river, oily feathers, and imprisoning darkness.

Upon returning to reality, did they immediately undergo immortal ascension and leave this place? Lumian pondered for a few seconds before activating the black mark on his right shoulder, teleporting to a spot in the forest at the special dream's periphery.

As a Hunter, Lumian had memorized the correct route and environmental characteristics after Amandina led him to the black ancient tomb. After nearly fifteen minutes, he arrived at an area where numerous tree roots protruded from the ground, resembling blood vessels.

However, the place where the black stone-like ancient tomb should have stood was empty.

Does that black ancient tomb only exist in dreams and can't be encountered in reality? Lumian speculated seriously. So the Pale Empress and the other Angels can't descend personally and can only send people to participate in the Dream Festival?

As his thoughts raced, Lumian's gaze darted back and forth across the land corresponding to the black ancient tomb. It was indeed a little different from its surroundings—no intertwined tree roots protruded from the ground, and it was flat and stoneless.

Approaching thoughtfully, Lumian took out his straight sword and used it as a shovel, attempting to dig into the soil. Just as he dug a small pit, his eyelids twitched.

Buried in the dark brown soil were two white feathers stained with light-yellow oil!

Taking a slow breath, Lumian dug deeper.

Before long, a palm-sized, dark, slightly moist, and sticky soil lump came into view.

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Chapter 697 Madam Magician's Explanation

□□As Lumian gazed at the peculiar soil, he couldn't help but recall the scene of Hela retrieving the Samaritan Women's Spring.

After a moment of contemplation, he retrieved gold bars and coins from his Traveler's Bag and ignited a blazing white fireball in his palm.

As the flames surged, the gold gradually melted under the control of his spirituality, forming a small golden box.

Lumian then used the flames as a blade to fashion a cover for the box.

Once the gold had cooled and solidified, he used the straight sword as a shovel to transfer the palm-sized clump of soil into the box before closing the lid.

After stowing away the golden box, Lumian noticed that the straight sword in his hand had become rusty and decayed.

Rather than being alarmed, Lumian was delighted. He muttered to himself, "That soil is indeed magical…"

This was one of his gains from the Dream Festival.

Despite not obtaining the Beyonder characteristics of Reaza and Maslow, and the mysterious disappearance of the man and woman who served the Demon, Lumian had finally acquired something of value.

He continued searching the area but found no other traces. Left with no other option, he teleported back to the second floor of the Brieu Motel.

By then, much of the smoke and dust caused by the meteorite had dissipated. The crimson moon's light cast an eerie glow over Tizamo.

Lumian noticed a folded letter on the master bedroom's desk, with a thin brass-like metal sheet on top.

Madam Magician's response is swift tonight… Lumian picked up the brass plate and examined the mysterious patterns and words etched upon it, but he couldn't discern their meaning or purpose. He couldn't even sense the corresponding spirituality glow.

Shaking his head, Lumian temporarily set aside the brass sheet. With a gentle grab of his right hand, he conjured a floating incandescent white fireball.

Under its glow, he sat down and began reading Madam Magician's reply.

"There's no doubt about it. From what you've described, the corpse in the dream tomb belongs to Naboredisley.

"As for Naboredisley, there's a high likelihood that it's an alias of Devil Monarch Farbauti or a real name that can be used under certain circumstances.

"Don't you find it strange that Naboredisley, as a Devil Monarch and one of the eight ancient gods who once ruled the world, can bestow superpowers from the Prisoner pathway?

"This abnormality is quite normal for the ancient gods.

"They didn't advance according to the paths of the divine, but were born directly for some unknown reason. Their characteristics were a mix of Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristics from other pathways, or even more than one. Considering Demon Warlock Burman's situation, you can see how unhinged and violent the ancient gods were.

"There's a significant difference between ancient gods and subsequent true gods, but this doesn't mean that They are weak. They might even be stronger.

"Among them, although Farbauti is the Devil Monarch, He blends in Sequence 1 Abomination from a neighboring pathway. Therefore, His state is one of the best among the eight ancient gods. He has also become the only ancient god alive in Their original form.

"In fact, if Farbauti were to gather the ingredients of the Devil pathway as a Sequence 1 Abomination and complete the deity-ascension ritual to advance, He would be equivalent to a true god now—a stronger true god. He wouldn't be an ancient god described by words like madness, cruelty, violence, and bloodlust.

"Of course, as the Devil Monarch, even if He had done so, He will inevitably exhibit the characteristics of I am the Abyss, the Abyss is Me, experiencing strong influence from this pathway. As for the state of a Devil, you should be well aware. Therefore, Farbauti is also one of the two or three most unhinged ancient gods. This doesn't contradict His better state.

"That's all for the ancient gods. That's not my primary purpose in writing.

"In short, the one in the dream tomb is indeed Naboredisley, the other Naboredisley in the form of an Abomination."

Is that so… Ancient gods possess Beyonder characteristics of neighboring or non-neighboring pathways, and Naboredisley has already displayed the ability to separate different desires and emotions… Lumian no longer harbored any doubts

about the cold corpse's ability to bestow Wraith powers.

After some thought, he reread Madam Magician's letter.

"You mentioned that Naboredisley took the initiative to lie back in the dream tomb and continue in a dead state. This is a very rational choice for Him.

"Furthermore, I must say it's a good death. Continue in this dead state until after the apocalypse!

"You don't need to know the exact reason. To put it simply, you can see that Naboredisley, or the Devil Monarch Farbauti, is in a terrible state. As an Abomination, His demise is more suitable than Him living. It's better for both Him and this world.

"Of course, this can't be a simple death. He chose a good place to die. This will allow His corpse to enjoy peace and tranquility, safe from the Mother Tree of Desire's harassment.

"Now, you should understand. That entity had written a story and created a coincidence, allowing you to come into contact with Naboredisley in the Feynapotter Kingdom. Then, you went to Hanth Island and the New City of Silver. His goal was to send information to Naboredisley in the dream ancient tomb, allowing Him to continue sleeping and be a corpse instead of being resurrected. Simultaneously, this also prevents various factions from trying to obtain the Sequence 1 Beyonder characteristic.

"Tsk, as expected of a remnant from ancient times. He's the protagonist who personally ended the rule of the ancient gods. The secrets and various key matters He knows perhaps exceed all of us combined.

"Apart from Him and the Evernight Goddess, who else would know about mysticism festivals like the Dream Festival, which you forget when you wake up? Who would have thought that the corpse was part of the Devil Monarch?

"The substantial digestion of the Reaper potion, the acquisition of the golden mask, and the formation of the corroded soil should be the rewards He promised.

"Remember to give me that corroded soil. It's useless to you, but I can help you exchange it for something. It might also present an opportunity, but I can't discern what it is for now.

"And with that golden mask, you can boldly venture into the Underworld when the opportunity arises in the future. Otherwise, the living won't be able to stay in the Underworld for even a second.

"Those golden masks come from the fallen Death, the ancestor of the Eggers family. They were originally created to assist Death's direct descendants in entering and exiting the Underworld and Death's kingdom.

"Their purpose is twofold. Firstly, to protect the wearer from the corrosion of the aura of death. Secondly, to transform the wearer into an undead creature. Their bodies no longer have vital points, while their minds and consciousness can maintain their living state.

"Do you understand why Naboredisley's corpse wore the Death mask? If it didn't, it would have died completely in the dream tomb, with no possibility of revival.

"Similarly, knowing the golden mask's functions and the state of the corpse, you should understand why Hisoka put on the golden mask. It allows a corpse to mistake Hisoka for one of its kind without affecting him. It also protects Hisoka from the corrosion of the tomb's aura of death.

"The first phantom that experienced an Ascension activated the corpse's sleeping spirit under the golden mask's protection, but without awakening His consciousness. In this state, Hisoka can use His resemblance to the corpse to make the corpse mistake Him for His spirit and accept His dominance. Isn't this style familiar? That Celestial Worthy is indeed the strongest god who seeks out errors and exploits loopholes.

"By the time the second phantom that underwent Ascension entered the dream ancient tomb, the corpse's consciousness would have been basically awakened. Even if Hisoka were still alive, he wouldn't be able to complete his grand plan.

"That's the gist of the matter. The Numinous Episcopate's purpose is the ancient tomb itself, the golden mask that has endured the corresponding corrosion in the tomb for over a millennium. The Nois family's archduke, a collaborator of the Rose School of Thought, desires Naboredisley's corpse, while the temperance faction seeks to retrieve Miss Messenger's heart. Their goals were actually different, yet they fought to the death. I have to say, it's quite humorous and ironic.

"Of course, this is mainly because they can't trust each other, and there's indeed a possibility that it's a situation where the winner takes all. Does Miss Messenger want to consume Naboredisley's Abomination body? Of course She does!"

Miss Messenger… The lady who used the lucky gold coin to buy the heart from Ludwig? Why is she called Miss Messenger? It's impossible for Her to be someone's messenger, right? She's an Angel! Uh… Mr. Fool's messenger? So that's why there's a lucky gold coin closely related to Mr. Fool… Lumian was sharp, and he quickly made a guess.

He continued reading the last part of the letter.

"I forgot to mention that wearing that golden mask also poses problems.

"As you can imagine, once you transform into an undead creature and don't have any vital points on your body, the purification of sunlight and lightning will be fatal to you. Moreover, if a living person wears that golden mask for too long, they will truly become deceased. When that time comes, once the mask is removed, their mind and consciousness will be unprotected and they will die immediately.

"Let me see what else I haven't mentioned…

"Yes, you said that the Underworld Daoist and Naboredisley's corpse had looked at Iveljsta Eggers without doing anything to him. That gave me some ideas.

"It's highly likely that the one who helped bury Naboredisley's Abomination corpse and construct the dream grave was the ancestor of the Eggers family, the deceased Death.

"After He went mad, perhaps He interacted with the Underworld Daoist, who guarded the river and the Blood Emperor's afterimage. And for some reason, He agreed to Naboredisley's request for help, causing His Abomination corpse to slumber in a special dream.

"Therefore, be it the Underworld Daoist or Naboredisley's corpse, even if they only have their instincts left, they will still treat the Eggers family's bloodline specially."

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Chapter 698 Aftermath

□□Considering Madam Magician's conjecture, Lumian suddenly felt that the deceased Death, the ancestor of the Eggers family, was indeed legendary.

After becoming a true god, He seemed to have gone mad. He incited the Pale Disaster. His demise created the Berserk Sea, isolating the Northern and Southern Continents for more than a millennium. He had a connection to the mysterious Underworld Daoist. He buried the Abomination corpse of the Devil Monarch. He left behind the massive Balam Empire with numerous descendants. The golden mask He created for His descendants to enter and exit the Underworld is still being fought over to this day…

Lumian retrieved the golden mask he had obtained from Hisoka from his Traveler's Bag. He caressed its cold surface and sighed silently.

This is a true deity's creation…

With a sigh, Lumian read the last two pages of the lengthy letter.

"Back to yourself. The Underworld Daoist mark on you only seals the influence of the Blood Emperor's remnant aura on the outside world. It doesn't eliminate its existence.

"In other words, you can no longer use Alista Tudor's remnant aura to scare others. However, it can still be useful when you need to verify your corresponding 'identity.'

"There are pros and cons to this situation. Although you've lost your potent means of intimidating others, you don't have to worry about attracting the attention of certain high-ranking individuals by using the Blood Emperor's remnant aura. Furthermore, the Underworld Daoist mark might have a special effect in the future.

"Emperor Roselle once said that since you can't resist, try to enjoy yourself."

Lumian turned his right hand over and looked at his palm. Compared to the decay in his dream, only a small pale-white mark remained. Beneath the pale-whiteness, a faint red scarred mark could be seen.

What special use can it have? To intimidate the undead? Lumian muttered to himself in puzzlement, momentarily at a loss.

At the end of the letter, Madam Magician wrote:

"This year's Dream Festival may have ended, but the special dream and ancient tomb haven't disappeared. The Dream Festival will still happen next year.

"When the time comes, the Demon from the Nois family and His Rose School of Thought allies, who confirmed the ancient tomb's situation this year, might continue their attempts. They might even bring more targeted and powerful items, Beyonders, or projections.

"Not only do we have to stop them when the time comes, but we also have to make preparations in advance.

"Furthermore, for the special dream to still have dream projections as guardians, we can't relocate the entirety of Tizamo. Therefore, we have to do something for the people here.

"Of course, after completing the last task, the subsequent problems of the Dream Festival will have nothing to do with you unless you become an Angel by then. But isn't that too far-fetched?

"The last thing you need to do is enter that special dream with the half-finished brass charm I sent with the letter and perform the following ritual before the black ancient tomb.

"The complete process of the ritual is:

"…"

After carefully reading the ritual's description, Lumian assessed his spirituality and stowed away the half-finished brass charm.

Then, he retrieved the golden box containing the peculiar soil, unfolded the letter, and penned a reply:

"Honorable Madam Magician,

"I will follow your instructions and complete the ritual.

"This is that strange soil…"

Lumian paused and added:

"Remember to send back the box containing it."

It was made of gold!

Recalling Lugano's promise of compensation and Ludwig's growing appetite, Lumian, who was quite wealthy, felt the need to be frugal.

He didn't need to worry about the potion formula, Beyonder ingredients, or mystical items for the time being, but he needed to provide for two people now!

Furthermore, gold played an important role in mysticism. Franca had been accumulating gold in recent months, hoping to forge a golden body for "Armored Shadow" Chen Tu.

After writing the reply, Lumian set up a ritual and summoned the "doll" messenger.

The messenger remained cautious and furtive, not uttering a word.

What did it sense? Lumian was about to inquire when he suddenly thought of a possibility.

Could it be because Miss Messenger, whom Madam Magician mentioned, had been here?

They are both messengers, so they might know each other and be related. And that person is an Angel…

Lumian shut his mouth and watched as the "doll" messenger retreated into the candlelight with the golden box.

He extinguished the candle, stowed away the ritual-related items, and returned to the living room. He sat across from Ludwig, who still had half his food left untouched.

Lumian looked at Ludwig, who wore a blue pajama hat with yellow stars, and smiled.

"Lend me something."

Ludwig raised his head, his mouth moving as he inquired with his eyes.

Lumian maintained a friendly smile.

"The gold coin from earlier."

Ludwig lowered his head and focused on eating a piece of beef jerky, as if he hadn't heard Lumian.

"It'll only take half an hour. Yes, half an hour. I won't cause any harm. I'll definitely return it to you as it was," Lumian said with a sigh. "I've been providing for you for a long time, giving you food and drink…"

At this point, Lumian suddenly stopped. After a few seconds, he continued, "Isn't that worth lending me your lucky gold coin for half an hour? When have I ever lied to you?"

"Often," Ludwig mumbled.

He looked up at Lumian for a few seconds before retrieving the Loen gold coin from his pocket.

"Twenty minutes, tops."

"Deal!" Lumian swiftly accepted the lucky gold coin with a radiant smile.

To conserve his spirituality, he refrained from teleporting. Instead, he moved swiftly through the shadows and arrived at "Hisoka" Twanaku's house.

Robert and Amandina had already left.

Lumian found a spot and leaned against the wall. Using Cogitation, he quickly drifted off to sleep.

…

In the special dream, in the primitive forest.

Using the shadows in the darkness, Lumian reached the edge of the dream and found himself in the chaotic zone.

After some thought, he left the shadow and donned the golden mask crafted by Death.

Amidst the cold corrosion and heavy pressure, Lumian saw a dream fragment of a black ancient tomb and the path leading to it.

He quickly reached his destination. The corpses had vanished, leaving only the ancient tomb, resembling a black boulder, standing silently.

Lumian removed the mask and observed for a moment. Using a raised tree root as an altar, he placed candles, essential oil, herbal powder, a cauldron, and the half-finished brass charm on it. He followed the instructions in Madam Magician's letter and dealt with them one by one.

Finally, Lumian placed the lucky gold coin between the two candles corresponding to Mr. Fool.

Instead of creating a wall of spirituality, he lit the candles in the order from god to person, from left to right, and took two steps back.

Lumian gazed at the burning candle flame and recited in ancient Hermes,

"The Fool that doesn't belong to this era, the mysterious ruler above the gray fog; the King of Yellow and Black who wields good luck…"

Silently, a thin gray fog emanated from the void, enveloping the area around the black ancient tomb and the entire special dream.

Lumian's left chest heated up slightly, preventing his thoughts from slowing down, and his body showed no signs of disintegrating.

He quickly took two steps forward and ignited the corresponding essential oil extract and herbal powder. He placed the half-finished brass charm in the center of the altar.

Then, Lumian straightened up and said in Hermes, "I implore you,

"I implore you to grant this charm power.

"I implore you to allow this power to control this dream…"

After reciting all the remaining incantations and completing the remaining steps of the ritual, Lumian saw the lucky gold coin emit a hazy glow. One of the candles representing Mr. Fool darkened, and the other took on a brass hue.

Immediately after, the darkness and brass candlelight entangled with the half-finished brass charm.

The brass charm emitted a blinding light, and Lumian couldn't help but close his eyes.

By the time he adjusted and opened his eyes, the brass charm had vanished. The soil, rocks, and tree roots in front of the black ancient tomb surged, forming a tombstone-like object.

Ancient Feysac words appeared on the tombstone one after another:

"All living beings are equal before the law. Even Angels can be killed by ordinary people.

"Lost items are regarded as abandonment.

"Anything can be done during the Dream Festival, but not killing or rape.

"Murderers shall die.

"Rapists shall die.

"…"

What… What pathway's power is this? It resembles the Arbiter pathway… Killing isn't allowed for the next Dream Festival? Even an Angel can be harmed by me? Lumian hadn't expected Madam Magician's preparations.

He swiftly packed his belongings and planned to leave the area.

Finally, Lumian had an idea when he saw the "tombstone."

With a smile, he retrieved a card from his Traveler's Bag, bent down, and placed it on the ground beneath the tombstone.

It was a tarot card depicting a man in green holding a wand against attacking wands at the foot of a mountain.

Minor Arcana card, Seven of Wands!

Lumian didn't know if the tarot cards representing him could remain in the dream or in front of the tombstone. He simply wanted to give it a try. After all, he hadn't done so since becoming a member of the Tarot Club.

…

Upon returning to the real world, Lumian reached into his Traveler's Bag and examined it.

As expected, the half-finished brass charm had vanished, as had the Minor Arcana card, the Seven of Wands.

The rules of the special dream are indeed a little different… Lumian nodded thoughtfully and returned the lucky gold coin to Ludwig at the Brieu Motel.

Then, Lumian stepped onto the street. In the darkness, he passed Camus, Rhea, Lugano, and the others, who were busy rescuing and treating people, and arrived at Saint-Sien Cathedral.

All the candles in the cathedral had been lit, but only Padre Cali was present.

Dressed in a white robe adorned with golden threads, he knelt before the altar and the Sacred Emblem, his head bowed in anguish.

Lumian walked in step by step and took a seat in the front row. He watched Padre Cali quietly without disturbing him.

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Chapter 699 Who is to Blame?

□□The smoke and dust caused by the meteorite had mostly dissipated, and the commotion on the street had gradually subsided. The injured had largely escaped danger thanks to swift treatment, but some still perished, eliciting occasional cries of anguish.

Inside Saint-Sien Cathedral, Padre Cali completed his penance. He stood and turned to face Lumian, who sat silently in the front pew, observing him.

Lumian chuckled and asked casually, "Is repentance still of any use?"

Without waiting for a response, he added habitually, "You must know your fate is sealed. You won't survive more than a few days."

Paleness showed through Padre Cali's dark-brown complexion as he calmly replied, "If repentance worked, it wouldn't be true repentance."

This statement seemed to bring him a measure of peace.

"I repented because I wanted to, not to bargain for understanding or redemption. Looking back, I have indeed made many mistakes. I yearned for higher status and the approval of you Northerners. That desire blinded me, and I succumbed to the Demon's temptations."

Lumian scoffed upon hearing this.

"Is that truly the case? Did desire actually cloud your judgment?"

Noting the padre's bewildered expression, Lumian leaned back and gazed up at the Sun Sacred Emblem.

"Did your ambition for prestige and recognition from Northerners force you to collaborate with Twanaku, compel you to become a Wraith as an Eternal Blazing Sun padre, make you receptive to the Demon's allure, or drive you to exploit those boys? No, you chose this path of your own volition."

Padre Cali's lips quivered as if to object, but he couldn't find the words.

Lumian smiled and continued, "Many in this world still crave elevated status and the recognition of certain groups. Most of them simply work hard to contribute and combat evil with all their strength. They never consort with Demons, hoping to attain their goals through righteous means. Even in the face of repeated failure, they don't descend into the abyss.

"They share the same desires, yet they maintain self-control while you could not. Desire didn't cloud your mind—your mind chose depravity."

Padre Cali fell silent, at a loss for words.

Lumian sighed with a smile.

"A relative once told me, 'Intense desire fuels human progress, but it's also the demon that drags humans into the abyss. Good or bad, light or darkness—it all hinges on us, on that single thought in a pivotal moment.'"

His face growing ever paler, Padre Cali lowered his head and rasped, "I have sinned…"

Lumian pressed a hand to his chest, his expression settling.

He looked at Padre Cali and laughed self-deprecatingly.

"I too have strong desires. Everyone does. If harboring intense desire is a sin, then you are a sinner, and so am I. We are all guilty."

Padre Cali's expression froze momentarily before he slowly turned around.

Kneeling once more before the altar, he gazed up at the immense Sun Sacred Emblem and spoke in a deep voice, "You are innocent. Desire itself is not sinful, but I am a true sinner."

He bowed his head as his body gradually became ethereal and transparent.

Thus, Padre Cali manifested as a Wraith before the Sacred Emblem.

An icy, sinister aura emanated from him, triggering a reaction from the emblem and altar.

The entire cathedral trembled slightly. A brilliant, sunlight-

like radiance seeped from the altar, emblem, stained glass, and religious murals, rapidly converging at the domed ceiling.

A dazzling golden pillar of light, accompanied by a hymnal voice, descended upon Padre Cali.

The Wraith-form padre trembled faintly but did not evade.

Under the searing holy light, his body disintegrated into ashes.

Lumian observed this scene expressionlessly, feeling neither joy nor sorrow.

As the dome's holy glow dissipated, leaving only candlelight illuminating the cathedral, Lumian remained seated in the front pew, quietly contemplating the spot

where Padre Cali had been purified.

After an indeterminate span, Camus and Rhea entered the cathedral, having finished their disaster relief efforts.

Camus sighed in relief upon seeing Louis Berry in the front row.

He smiled and said, "We still lack composure, prone to panic when calamity strikes. We were so focused on aiding the injured and trapped that we never anticipated a detestable man like Padre Cali suddenly going mad and trying to drag others down with him. It's fortunate you were here."

Rhea surveyed the surroundings and asked, "Where is Padre Cali?"

Lumian stared ahead at the altar and replied plainly, "After repenting, he utilized the cathedral's accumulated spirituality and the Sacred Emblem's unique properties to purify himself."

Rhea fell silent. After a few seconds, she spread her arms and proclaimed, "Praise the Sun!"

She then took a seat in the front pew on the opposite side, clasped her hands, bowed her head, and prayed fervently.

For a moment, Camus was unsure whether to sit or remain standing.

Lumian turned to him. "Have you recovered Reaza's Beyonder characteristic?"

Camus paused before responding, "Yes."

"And Maslow's?" Lumian shifted his gaze back to the Sacred Emblem.

"Its whereabouts are unknown," Camus replied.

Lumian stated calmly, "It should be in the meteorite impact zone."

Camus was taken aback. "Was the meteorite meant to claim most of the deceased? Is the Dream Festival's power truly that immense?"

"More potent than you realize," Lumian replied, as if discussing the next day's weather. "Reaza and Maslow belong to the Numinous Episcopate's Royal faction. Admiral Querarill is aware of their identities and that Reaza came to Tizamo to fulfill a mission assigned by the Royal faction's superiors."

Camus's expression shifted as he exhaled slowly.

"Even without you mentioning this, I wouldn't have harbored any ill will towards Captain Reaza. He did save me on multiple occasions, and this time, he didn't overtly betray me but rather the patrol team. My sense of belonging to the team isn't that strong.

"Now, I'm just relieved he's not a traitor."

Lumian smiled provocatively and said, "It benefits you as well. Port Pylos's patrol team now has a vacant vice-captain position, and your rival is already dead."

Camus didn't rise to the bait, smiling wryly instead.

"I plan to leave Matani.

"Thanks to your generosity, I've nearly saved enough to advance to Sequence 6. It's safer and simpler to return to my family and contact the main branch than to search the outside world.

"The patrol team is a small organization, after all. Sequence 6 is the limit. To reach Sequence 5, I'd need to forge close ties with the Numinous Episcopate, Rose School of Thought, Intis Bureau 8, the Eternal Blazing Sun Church, or the Church of Earth Mother, or become Admiral Querarill's trusted aide. Given my Castiya surname, the choice is clear."

If the Castiya royal family truly accepts you, your potential would be far greater… Lumian chuckled and said, "I thought you were leaving this place of sorrow due to a failed romance."

Camus abruptly choked on his saliva and coughed several times.

After Rhea concluded her prayers, she departed the cathedral with Camus.

Lumian lingered in the front pew, savoring the solitude.

After a while, Amandina appeared at the entrance, clad in black hunting attire.

"Why are you alone here?" the girl muttered, her gaze darting about as if searching for something.

"Why have you come?" Lumian asked nonchalantly.

Amandina sat beside him and chuckled.

"I wanted to see if Robert would come looking for the dying Padre Cali, but surprisingly, you're the only one here."

"Padre Cali purified himself. I doubt Robert has been here," Lumian answered truthfully.

"Is that so…" Amandina felt a pang of disappointment. "If he had really come to confront Padre Cali, it would mean he still is a man…"

Lumian remained silent.

Amandina faced the altar and Sacred Emblem, offering a brief prayer.

Her task complete, she glanced around eagerly and asked, "Will there be another Dream Festival next year?"

"Yes." Lumian didn't hide anything.

Joy instantly lit up Amandina's features.

"Is that black ancient tomb still there? Can I gain superpowers by touching it again?"

"Of course," Lumian turned to her, smiling. "But the outsiders participating in next year's Dream Festival will be even stronger and more terrifying, surpassing the evil cloth doll, crystal skull, and human skin man you encountered."

Amandina's expression fell.

"Really? In that case, I'll find an excuse to stay in Port Pylos during next year's festival and bring my parents along."

"Have you returned to Palm Manor?" Lumian inquired.

Amandina sighed and smiled.

"I went back briefly. Not wanting to disrupt their facade of love, I left again."

She paused, eyes sparkling with curiosity.

"Besides touching the black tomb, are there other ways for me to advance my Sequence?"

"You can buy formulas and drink potions to progress along one of three paths—Sleepless, Corpse Collector, or Warrior," Lumian divulged the relevant mystical knowledge without reservation. After some thought, he added, "Also, it wasn't the black tomb that granted you superpowers. It was that figure…"

Lumian was suddenly perplexed.

What was the connection between Amandina, Robert, and the Underworld Daoist?

Typically, boons were bestowed upon believers by deities or angels, but Amandina and Robert had no faith in the Underworld Daoist. They weren't even aware of His existence.

Considering the conventions of various secret organizations and the customs Franca occasionally mentioned, Amandina should have addressed the Underworld Daoist as "Teacher"!

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Chapter 700 Return

□□In the special dream, Amandina mentioned that the figure, known as the Underworld Daoist, had nodded at her… "Armored Shadow" Chen Tu is suspected to be related to the Underworld Daoist… Franca is accumulating gold to create a golden body for Chen Tu to obtain more information… Lumian's mind raced with these thoughts.

He turned to Amandina with a smile.

"You won't only encounter that figure during the Dream Festival."

"It's possible normally?" Amandina asked, surprised.

What kind of smarts do you have… Lumian inwardly criticized, shaking his head and smiling.

"What I mean is, it's not just in Tizamo where you can encounter that figure on a specific date."

Amandina pondered for a few moments before grasping the underlying meaning behind Louis Berry's words.

"Have you seen that figure elsewhere?

"I thought you couldn't see him and could only observe through me?"

Thankfully, you're not that dense… Lumian retrieved the golden mask from his Traveler's Bag.

"I could see after putting this on."

Without waiting for Amandina's response, Lumian added with a smile, "I did encounter that figure elsewhere."

He used "encounter" instead of "meeting" to ensure his statement couldn't be more truthful.

He wanted to say, "I even know His name," but didn't feel like explaining to Amandina why he used the pronoun "He" to address the Underworld Daoist respectfully.

Amandina's expression turned excited. "Where?"

"In Trier," Lumian replied honestly.

This was the information he wanted the other party to know.

"Trier…" Amandina felt a mix of captivation and fear.

As an Intisian born and raised on the Southern Continent, she had heard countless rumors about the Capital of Joy and understood its vibrancy and prosperity. Trier had nearly become her dream paradise, but the furthest she had ventured was Port Pylos, never leaving Matani. If given the chance to visit Trier, fear was her initial reaction.

After all, she was still a girl under 18.

Lumian continued candidly, "In the future, I know someone who might interact with that figure. I hope you can provide her with some assistance—the non-combat kind.

"To that end, I can take you to Trier and help you enter the area where the figure might appear. I can also provide some protection.

"How about it? Do you want to strike such a deal?"

"I-I…" Amandina hesitated, instinctively seeking an excuse. "My parents won't allow me to leave Matani for Trier now. At the very least, I have to wait until I get a chance to attend university there."

Lumian found it amusing and remarked, "I'm not asking you to permanently relocate to Trier. You can go on Saturday and return on Sunday."

"Huh?" Amandina was taken aback.

She had imagined a long-distance voyage, hiking through mountains and wading across rivers, forever bidding farewell to her home.

Lumian arched an eyebrow.

"It's not like I haven't teleported you in the dream before."

"B-but isn't that just a small area?" Amandina's eyes lit up. "Can you really teleport directly from Matani to Trier?"

Lumian nodded slightly.

"Yes, I might need to make a transit once or twice along the way, but it will still allow you to reach Trier quickly."

"Quickly…" Amandina's interest was piqued. She yearned to experience such wonders.

However, she didn't make a decision immediately.

Lumian didn't rush her.

"No need to decide right away. Meeting that figure again is actually quite dangerous. You should first truly come into contact with Matani's mysticism circle and learn the basics about Beyonders from Rhea. Only then should you consider accepting this deal. It might take three months, half a year, or even a year."

Amandina breathed a sigh of relief. "Understood."

Curious, she asked, "Is your friend a woman?"

He had used the pronoun "she."

In our hearts and minds, she has always been one. As for how she identifies, sometimes yes, sometimes no… Lumian inwardly criticized Franca and nodded slightly.

"Yes."

Amandina asked excitedly, "Your lover?"

Lumian chuckled.

"Of course not. Why do you always fixate on such matters?"

As Lumian spoke, he retrieved a post-it note and fountain pen from his Traveler's Bag. He scribbled a few lines and handed them to Amandina.

Amandina took it and carefully read it under the cathedral's candlelight:

"A creature wandering above the world, the penitent who awakens from the flames of pain, a messenger that belongs solely to Lumian Lee."

"What's this?" Amandina was bewildered.

"My messenger. Set up a ritual once you've made up your mind. Use this incantation to summon my messenger and inform me of your decision," Lumian explained simply.

Amandina grew increasingly perplexed.

"What ritual? What summoning? This isn't a conventional messenger?"

Lumian raised his eyebrows again.

"Have you never heard of a messenger in the mysticism domain? Don't you know about summoning rituals?"

Amandina smiled sheepishly and said, "I came into contact with superpowers last year and gathered some information about the pathways of the divine through

Robert and a few mysticism enthusiasts. I know about rituals, but I'm not sure about the details."

Then, her eyes lit up.

"You'll teach me, won't you? Otherwise, I wouldn't be able to summon your messenger.

"Also, is your real name not Louis Berry, but Lumian Lee?

"Y-you took a pen and paper from that coin bag. You also took your previous items from there. What kind of mystical item is this?

"…"

Lumian couldn't help but glance up at the golden spherical dome.

…

The following morning, Lumian left the Brieu Motel with Ludwig and Lugano. They passed through streets still strewn with ruins and arrived at Bunia's café.

The owner, Bunia, maintained his usual shyness and politely inquired about their needs.

Lumian ordered three cups of Cosa coffee and three servings of Matani's specialty breakfast, Ocapa.

Ocapa was made from rice, chicken, eggs, potatoes, and common local spices wrapped in leaves from the Ocapa trees. It was filling and fragrant, and one couldn't stop eating once they started.

Lumian gazed at the spread of Ocapa, picked up his cutlery, and scooped a spoonful into his mouth.

The fragrance of the leaves, the salted egg yolk, the weightiness of the rice, the tenderness of the chicken, the softness of the potatoes, and the strange rich aroma combined to create a unique texture.

As Lumian ate, he casually surveyed the pedestrians and café patrons on the street.

After the sorrow and fear of the previous night, they had become gentle again, no longer revealing excessive emotions. When they spoke to others, they always had a faint smile on their faces.

After Ludwig finished his second meal of the morning, Lumian found a secluded corner, changed into winter clothes, and disappeared from Tizamo with him and Lugano.

This time, Lumian refrained from teleporting directly to Franca, as Lugano, Ludwig, and the two Demonesses were unfamiliar with each other.

Lumian chose the rarely used entrance to Underground Trier in Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative. The trio swiftly outlined themselves on the steel steps.

Upon returning to the surface, Lumian spotted a few college students carrying carbide lamps and lanterns. They jested as they passed by the trio and entered Underground Trier.

As he turned onto the nearest main street, the first thing Lumian saw was a scantily clad man in chains. He crawled slowly along the street in a dog-like manner. If anyone dared to glance at him, he would glare back and bark twice.

In the next moment, the street artists on the corner played a rhythmic melody. Passersby more or less danced with relaxed and satisfied smiles on their faces. The man acting as a dog and trembling in the cold wind also raised his hind leg.

This was very different from the streets in the market district.

Quartier de la Cathédrale Commémorative was renowned for its numerous universities.

Lumian averted his gaze from the pedestrians' smiles and led Lugano and Ludwig to Anthony's nearby rented house.

It was on the fourth floor, near the end of the corridor.

Knock! Knock! Knock! Lumian knocked on the door without hesitation.

Soon, he saw Anthony, who was dressed differently from before.

In a white shirt, light gray cashmere sweater, black tweed coat, dark-red bow tie, gold-rimmed glasses, and a light-

yellow wig, his beard was cleanly shaven, and his face was no longer greasy. The black grime in his pores was gone. He had the air of a successful member of high society.

"Are you in a relationship?" Lumian jested.

Anthony replied with a smile, "I'm attending a banquet hosted by the Trier Psychiatrist Guild today."

This was a necessary prerequisite for completing Madam Justice's mission.

Lumian entered the room and asked casually, "Have you obtained a psychiatrist license?"

Anthony nodded.

"I acquired a genuine identity and educational background. During the interview, I successfully 'convinced' the examiner."

"A genuine identity? Where's its original owner?" Lumian asked thoughtfully.

Anthony glanced at Lugano and Ludwig but didn't directly answer Lumian's question.

"What can I do for you?"

Lumian understood Anthony's meaning and temporarily abandoned the question. He briefly mentioned the Dream Festival's situation and the aftereffects of Lugano losing his arm in the dream.

He didn't mention how Lugano had lost his arm.

Anthony listened attentively and looked at Lugano.

"Such hysteria is easily resolved. Do you need a faster solution, or do you want it to be slower and gentler?"

Lugano replied without hesitation, "The faster one."

He had lost control of his right forearm!

Anthony's gaze shifted to Lugano's left side, furrowing his brow.

Lugano subconsciously turned to his left and followed suit.

At that moment, Anthony produced a dagger from nowhere and thrust it at Lugano's right forearm.

Lugano swiftly retracted his hand and blurted out, "What are you doing!?"

Anthony sheathed his dagger and replied calmly, "The treatment is over."

"Huh?" Lugano looked at his right hand in confusion and realized that it had "retracted" to his chest without being impeded.

Lumian chuckled and said to Lugano, "Keep an eye on Ludwig. Remember to prepare food for him."

Without waiting for Lugano's response, Lumian turned to Anthony. "Let's go find Franca and Jenna now."

Anthony glanced at Lumian and adjusted the gold-rimmed glasses he was unaccustomed to. "Alright."

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